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INSIDE

BUSINESS



The U.S. economy is showing more strength than at any time since 6 years ago. **» PAGE 13**

NATION



President Obama vows to sidestep Congress "whenever" necessary. **» PAGE 16**

A WINDY DAY

A girl tries to balance herself on a rail at the popular tourist site Banzai Cliff in Marpi, as her mother tries to snap a photograph of her during a windy Tuesday.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Firm to build new visitor attraction

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Investor to infuse over \$1M for Sea Touch Saipan

The company that owns the SandCastle at Hyatt Regency Saipan will be investing over \$1 million to build a world-class visitor attraction off the coast of Saipan that will allow visitors to interact with marine creatures such as turtles, sharks, and manta rays.

The attraction, to be called "Sea Touch Saipan," is projected to bring about \$118 million in total direct economic impact to the Commonwealth and its economy, according to Sea Touch Saipan CEO and president Mark Baldyga yesterday.

The Commonwealth Development Authority held a public hearing yesterday on the proposed business, which would specifically cater to interactive marine encounters.

See FIRM on Page 4

IN ARREST OF SENATOR'S COP SON

Senate inquires but no formal probe

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Acting Senate president Ray Yumul (Ind-Saipan) confirmed yesterday that one of the two vehicles a police officer allegedly used to sell methamphetamine or "ice" is leased to Senate vice president Victor Hocog's (R-Rota) office using gov-

» Torres names floor leader Yumul as acting president, not VP Hocog
» Bill on mandatory drug testing with Senate panel

ernment funds. Hocog is the father of the arrested police officer. While the Senate inquired about the status of the leased vehicle and whether Hocog was aware of the vehicle was used for alleged drug-related activities, there is

See SENATE on Page 4

Alleged fugitive is property mogul in China, HK

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Alleged Hong Kong fugitive Wei Zeng is no ordinary businessman but a known property developer and hotel and golf course mogul in China and Hong Kong, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

With the U.S. government's filing on Friday of a complaint for provisional arrest with a view toward extraditing the 51-year-

old Zheng, this will be the first high-profile extradition between the U.S. and Hong Kong governments since Washington's failed bid to secure the return of former National Security Agency contractor and whistleblower Edward Snowden in June 2013.

According to a Hong Kong media entity, Zeng is known, among other property projects, for his role as developer of the Beijing Palm Springs Apartments, one of the most luxuri-

ous apartment communities in Beijing.

Zhang Hong, Beijing bureau chief for the *South China Morning Post*, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that Zeng is "quite famous" in Hong Kong and China so everybody wants to learn about his case on Saipan.

Hong said the extradition matter would be closely watched in China and Hong Kong as this is a big development for U.S.-Hong Kong relationship after the Snowden extradition case.

It was Snowden who revealed the National Security Agency's top secret sur-

See FUGITIVE on Page 4

Sources: CNMI govt, Woodruff reach settlement deal. **PAGE 3**
New residential customer block approved. **PAGE 5**



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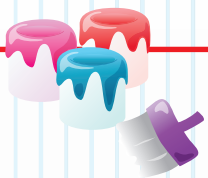
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For inquiries please contact Celia Pillarina at 235-2440 ext. 171

Local

Lunar New Year destinations

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Lunar New Year is just a day away and a number of hotels have prepared lavish Chinese-styled feasts to welcome the Year of the Wooden Horse.

The Lunar New Year is an important traditional Chinese holiday celebrated on the first day of the year of the Chinese calendar. In China, it is also known as the Spring Festival, the literal translation of the modern Chinese name. It is also celebrated in other Asian countries with heavy Chinese influence like Japan, Korea, the Philippines, among others, not to mention all Chinatowns scattered around the world.

Below are the venues for Lunar New Year celebrations on island.

Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan

Century Tours is expected to host the mother of all Lunar New Year parties when it hosts a countdown party starting tonight at its South Beach.

The Lunar New Year Countdown Party at the Garapan landmark would feature a live band, a Polynesian show, kids games, and fireworks.

The countdown bash will cost \$80 for adults and \$40 for children between the ages of 4 and 11. Local resident discount applies. For reservations and in-

quiries, call 234-6414 Ext. 1548 or 1455, 233-6414 or 483-0462.

Hyatt Regency Saipan

Hyatt Regency Saipan is welcoming the Year of the Horse with customary Chinese fare to tie in with this traditional celebration at its Miyako and Kili Café and Terrace restaurants.

On Jan. 30 and 31, from 11:30am to 2pm, the buffet at Miyako will feature Chinese-influenced dishes. The lunch buffet is priced at \$35 per person; Club at the Hyatt members are welcome.

For dinner, Hyatt invites guests to savor Chinese delicacies in a buffet at Kili Café and Terrace on Jan. 30 and 31, from 6pm to 9pm. Guests can enjoy fresh noodle stations, dumplings, and even a Peking duck station while witnessing a traditional lion dance in the restaurant on Jan. 31, from 6:30pm.

The dinner buffet at Kili Café and Terrace is priced at \$55 per person, \$35 for Club at the Hyatt members. The buffet is inclusive of wine, beers, and iced tea.

Reservations for Hyatt Regency Saipan can be made by calling 234-234 or by visiting saipan.regency.hyatt.com.

Pacific Islands Club Saipan

The San Antonio hotel will be celebrating the Lunar New Year with a low key but special buffet

tomorrow, Jan. 31, at its flagship Magellan Restaurant.

"We are very fortunate that on Jan. 31st our hotel is forecasting full occupancy of guest rooms. The year is starting out very well. We hope this trend will continue for all CNMI businesses," said Vicky Benavente, PIC Saipan executive assistant.

For more information or for reservations to PIC Saipan's special buffet, call 234-8208 or 234-7976, Ext. 4126 or 5186.

Kanoa Resort

Kanoa Resort will be hosting a Chinese New Year Dinner Buffet tonight, Jan. 30, at its Isla Café.

Hotel general manager Mark Ratliff said Kanoa Resort will have a "great Chinese dinner setup" at Isla Café.

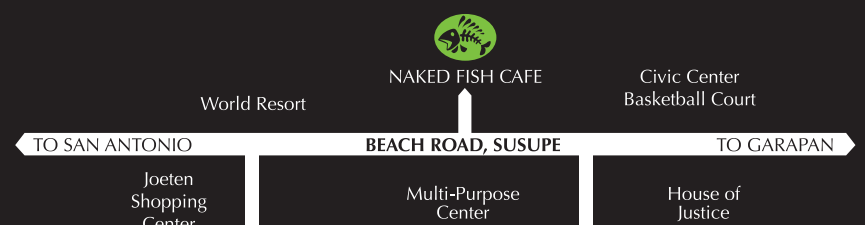
Cold appetizers include five-spices beef, chilled spicy cucumber, poached chicken with spring onions and ginger sauce. Hot entrees include fried rice with assorted seafood, steamed fish with spring onions and ginger, sautéed Chinese green vegetables, and sautéed king prawns with dry chili pepper. Fa Chai crab meat soup and sesame balls and Chinese Happy New Year cakes will also be served.

In honor of the Lunar New Year, Kanoa Resort will also have a midnight fireworks display and its Barefoot Bar will be open until 1pm. For reservations, call 234-6601.

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Sources: CNMI govt, Woodruff reach deal

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The CNMI government and Betty Johnson's local counsel,

Yumul pushes 10 percent tax on tour packages to the NMI

House Tourism Committee chair Ralph Yumul (Ind-Saipan) pre-filed a bill assessing a new special environmental management impact tax equivalent to 10 percent of each sold tour package to help fund the Marianas Visitors Authority's maintenance, protection, and preservation of tourist sites in the CNMI.

Yumul, in his House Bill 18-169, said the impact tax on tour packages shall be deposited into a special account for tourist site maintenance and upkeep, among other things.

Under the bill, tour operators are supposed to collect and document all fees collected and pay the fees collected to the CNMI Treasury every quarter.

Tour package is defined in Yu-

mul's bill as a "tour, usually including but not limited to, accommodations, meals, ground and water transportation, tour guides, etc., in one all-inclusive price."

Yumul said there is also a need to assist MVA in promoting the CNMI as a prime tourist destination.

"Tour operators greatly benefit from the promotion of the CNMI as a prime tourist destination and the resulting influx of tourists. As a result, the Legislature finds it reasonable to impose an impact tax per customer who avails of island tour packages provided by tour operators which shall be used solely for the maintenance, protection and preservation of our tourist sites," Yumul said. *(Haidee V. Eugenio)*

Man arrested for allegedly stalking his estranged wife

A man who was arrested in August for allegedly stalking his estranged wife was arrested again in San Vicente on the same charges on Tuesday.

Augustine B. Pangelinan, 38, was brought yesterday before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho on charges of contempt of court, disturbing the peace, and violation of court's protection order.

Camacho imposed a \$15,000 cash bail for Pangelinan's temporary release.

Police detective Jesse K. Seman stated in his report that a police officer responded on Jan. 6 to a disturbance complaint at the residence of the parents of the defendant's former wife.

Seman said it was the father of Pangelinan's former wife who sought police's help after the defendant came to the house

that day thrice, asking for the whereabouts of his daughter.

In the last visit, Pangelinan got angry, yelled, and shattered the glass window of his car's passenger side by punching it. He then left.

The father said he received 23 phone calls on Jan. 23 and that he recognized Pangelinan's voice in one of the calls.

The former wife also disclosed to police that last Friday, Pangelinan called her office more than 20 times. Her manager and their staff, mostly women, are now scared that the defendant would just appear in their office and harm them.

The former wife said the Superior Court already barred the defendant from harassing her, but he continues to violate it. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

CNMI yet to hire Rev&Tax chief even after wage hike

The CNMI has never had a permanent Division of Revenue and Taxation director since 2008 and even after the position's salary was raised by law in 2011 from \$40,800 to \$50,000. Now, Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) is proposing to give the governor flexibility in determining the director's salary to help attract qualified persons to fill the post.

"Giving the governor flexibility in determining the Rev&Tax director's salary will help fill the position vacant since 2008. Once we have a permanent director, that person will take ownership of the division and

laws will be better enforced when you have somebody up there held accountable in office... Honest businesses will benefit and they will not be disadvantaged," Manglona told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview.

During previous discussions on a bill increasing the director's salary, it was estimated that up to \$4.4 million may be realized by fully enforcing tax laws.

Yesterday, Manglona pre-filed Senate Bill 18-45 to amend Public Law 17-52 to allow flexibility in setting the salary of the Revenue and Taxation director. *(Haidee V. Eugenio)*

Sources said that no amount has been stated yet.

In his petition, Woodruff is asking for \$2.9 million. But the Office of the Attorney General on Tuesday expressed the CNMI government's opposition even to a recommendation to award Woodruff \$400,000 for his work in the case.

Johnson's Hawaii-based counsel, Bronster Hoshibata, made the \$400,000 recommendation.

Meanwhile, sources said that Bronster Hoshibata and Johnson's other counsel, Timothy Lord, did not reach a settlement agreement with the CNMI government as of yesterday.

Bronster Hoshibata and Lord are expected to argue their fees

at an evidentiary hearing on Monday in federal court.

Bronster Hoshibata is demanding \$17.5 million, while Lord is asking for either \$3.6 million or \$5.9 million.

According to the minutes of a telephone conference among the parties in the case on Tuesday, U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood gave the lawyers 24 hours to finalize all settlement negotiations.

Tydingco-Gatewood noted that to date, only Johnson's original counsel, Bruce Jorgensen, has agreed to settle with the CNMI government.

Jorgensen and the CNMI government have agreed that the terms of their settlement

should remain confidential for now. The terms, however, will be disclosed once the final agreement is signed.

Another telephonic status conference was held yesterday. Tydingco-Gatewood also ordered that the evidentiary hearing scheduled for Friday be moved to Monday, Feb. 3, at 9:30am.

Last week, Jorgensen filed a "unified statement" in support of his fee petition, saying he is amenable to a 7-percent reduc-

tion of hours and fees, lowering his billable hours to 3,678.7 hours and total fees to \$1,195,580.10. Jorgensen's initial request was at least \$18.6 million.

Under the settlement agreement, the CNMI government will shoulder the attorneys' fees and costs of Johnson's counsels upon the court's approval.

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SENATE

From Page 1

no formal Senate panel investigation at this time.

"As acting president, it doesn't appear the senator committed any unethical behavior with respect to the vehicle use that warrants an investigation by a special committee at this point, unless a majority of the members of the Senate feel otherwise," Yumul told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview.

Yumul said that based on

their initial inquiries and available information, the senator was not in the vehicle when it was used to allegedly sell "ice."

He said the senator also "didn't seem to be aware the vehicle was used for allegedly selling 'ice'."

But while the Senate is not conducting a formal ethical probe at this time, Yumul acknowledged that the available facts surrounding the arrest of a senator's police officer son raises questions about accountability, specifically government-paid vehicle leases for elected officials.

Some lawmakers and other

officials lease vehicles using government funds.

It is not clear if lawmakers' family members are allowed to use these vehicles for non-public purpose or to gain personal benefits.

"This could be one question for the Office of the Public Auditor to answer," another lawmaker said.

Yumul said the vehicle is leased by Hocog's office from Joeten Motors. The vehicle is currently "impounded" because of ongoing investigation. However, because DPS does not

have a safe storage, the vehicle is being placed at a Joeten Motors' facility, Yumul said. The acting Senate president added that Joeten Motors gave a courtesy car to Hocog's office while the originally leased vehicle is still part of an investigation.

Other lawmakers didn't want to comment on record, saying they are either friends with Sen. Hocog or they do not want to interfere in any ongoing investigation, whether by the police or the Office of the Attorney General.

They pointed out that a person is innocent until proven guilty, and that they also feel sorry for their colleague and his family.

Hocog, chairman of the Senate Rules and Procedures Committee, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

If it is proven in court that Hocog's police officer son used a government-paid leased vehicle for selling "ice," it won't be the first time in CNMI government history. Former governor Benigno R. Fitial's former driver also used the governor's vehicle to buy and distribute "ice."

Other lawmakers said the Department of Public Safety should also be called in for an oversight hearing to determine the number of individuals in the police force with past criminal records.

This stems from DPS Commissioner James Deleon Guer-

rero's admission that DPS hired Police Officer 1 Victor Val B. Hocog, the Senate vice president's son, among others also with prior criminal convictions because he came out as a "lesser evil."

Mandatory drug tests

The arrest of Police Officer 1 Hocog came some two weeks after DPS Commissioner Deleon Guerrero, along with Customs Director Joe Mafnas, testified before the Senate on a House bill requiring mandatory drug testing among law enforcement personnel.

In that Senate session, the DPS commissioner urged the senators to pass the much-needed House bill to help rid DPS and other law enforcement agencies of individuals using illegal drugs. Last week, the DPS commissioner declared a DPS war against "ice" use.

Yumul, chairman of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law, said his committee is now reviewing the House bill.

He said among other things, the committee would recommend ensuring there is a provision for funding the mandatory drug testing as well as the inclusion of all other law enforcement agencies besides DPS and Customs.

"We all agree we want to pass this mandatory drug testing bill but we need to ensure funding

and inclusion of all law enforcement personnel," he added.

Yumul said the JGL Committee has also sought guidance and comments from the Civil Service Commission. He said the Office of the Attorney General will also be sought for comment.

Senate 'presidency'

Senate President Ralph Torres (R-Saipan), meanwhile, delegated floor leader Yumul as acting Senate president while he is off island. Hocog, as vice president, is supposed to be the acting president when the president is out of the CNMI, unless Hocog is also outside the Commonwealth.

Yumul said he did not know as of yesterday Hocog's whereabouts.

Torres, in his Jan. 29 memo to the Senate, said he will be out of the CNMI from Jan. 29 through Feb. 4.

FUGITIVE

From Page 1

veillance program, PRISM. Citing incomplete paperwork, Hong Kong officials did not issue a provisional arrest warrant against Snowden. As a result, Snowden managed to leave Hong Kong, infuriating the U.S.

According to *South China Morning Post's* online edition yesterday, the Independent Commission Against Corruption issued a statement Tuesday night, thanking the U.S. government for its "valuable assistance" in securing Zeng's arrest.

The commission reportedly stated that a formal request for Zeng's surrender is now being prepared and will be submitted to the United States within 60 days of his arrest.

In the U.S. complaint, assistant U.S. attorney Jessica F. Cruz disclosed that Zeng allegedly bribed a bank official in Hong Kong with a bag filled with HK\$2.3 million, the equivalent of \$300,000, at a hotel in Hong Kong in October 2010.

Cruz said the cash was allegedly a reward for the bank official's help in a multi-million Hong Kong dollar loan extension application and for giving favorable credit information relating to Zeng's companies: Kostar Investments Limited and Shine City International Limited.

On July 4, 2011, the Hong Kong District Court issued a warrant for Zeng's arrest on the basis of the alleged bribery.

Zeng was arrested last Jan. 16 when he reportedly used a different identity to try to enter Saipan. He arrived on Saipan from Shanghai, China and sought admission to the CNMI using the name Zhi Qian Liu.

Shortly after the U.S. government filed the complaint for provisional arrest, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona issued the arrest warrant for Zeng. Federal agents served Zeng with the arrest warrant on Monday.



HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

WATCH OUT!

A vehicle passes through a partially flooded portion of Beach Road in Garapan yesterday, brought by several days of rains in the CNMI. Besides flood-prone areas, motorists and passersby also have to deal with potholes—some caused by ongoing or just-completed road excavations—during rainy days.

FIRM

From Page 1

Speaking to members of the public, Baldyga said that Sea Touch Saipan is proposed to be located in front of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan in Garapan. The project location is about 140 feet from the shoreline.

The project will give visitors the opportunity to play with, swim, and learn from sea animals such as sharks and stingrays.

In the first three years of the business, Baldyga projects to accommodate from 60 to 120 visitors per day. This is on top of island residents who will also visit the attraction. He projects about 1,200 residents visiting Sea Touch Saipan per year, excluding school groups.

In its initial proposal, Baldyga targets to employ 25 personnel in the first three years of the business. This work pool is anticipated to grow.

In direct benefits, Baldyga forecasts the following benefits in the first few years of the business: \$20 million in direct wages; \$24 million in direct expenses; \$2 million in lease payments; and \$13 million in agents' commissions.

This is \$59 million in direct payments, or \$118 million in total direct economic impact to the CNMI if one uses the standard 2.0 multiplier, according to Baldyga.

He said his business plan would have positive impacts on the island's tourism industry, the job and trainings that would



MONETH G. DEPOSA

Sea Touch Saipan president and CEO Mark Baldyga, second from right, addresses the public during yesterday's hearing at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center where he presented the company's proposed \$1 million-plus investment.

be created, the multi-million dollar investments and direct economic impact, as well as the contributions this could bring to the community at large.

Despite the "high risk" of such an investment, Baldyga said he is committed to build the brand new attraction as it would definitely excite tourists to return to Saipan. He cited exit surveys conducted among visitors that indicate that 79 percent say they want to see more attractions. He is convinced that Sea Touch Saipan would help convince these tourists to return and ex-

tend their stay on island.

Baldyga is also CEO of Baldyga Group, which owns the SandCastle. That business started in 2000 and was among the first firms granted the government's qualified certificate program.

Valuable investment

CDA director Manuel Sablan described the proposed business plan as a "very valuable investment" for the CNMI.

CDA handles the government's QC program, which provides eligible businesses tax rebates and incentives.

"This is the kind of invest-

ment that CDA is always in support of. Once terms and conditions are worked out for its QC, it will be ready to go," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* after yesterday's public hearing at Multi-Purpose Center.

According to CDA QC analyst Carline Sablan, the agency has until March 1 to submit its recommendation to the governor, who is the ultimate decision-maker for the QC program.

Saipan Tribune learned that Sea Touch Saipan turned in its QC application in November last year.

Besides CDA officials, two

other individuals expressed their support for the proposed business at yesterday's public hearing.

According to Alex Sablan, president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, if there's any business that must be granted QC benefits, Sea Touch Saipan deserves to get one. He said the new venture is "unique" to the CNMI and would positively impact the economy.

Tim Goodwin also expressed support for the company and its promise of a fun, exciting experience for everyone on island.

New residential customer block approved

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After hearing the rationale be-

Marshall Islands president to visit Hiroshima in mid-Feb.

Marshall Islands President Christopher Loeak on Tuesday expressed his readiness to visit Hiroshima in February ahead of the 60th anniversary in March of a U.S. hydrogen bomb test over the Pacific island nation.

In an interview with Kyodo News in Majuro, Loeak stressed the close link between Japan and the Marshall Islands, saying in reference to his planned visit to Hiroshima, which suffered an atomic bombing by the United States in 1945, that the two countries share the "effects of nuclear weapons."

Some Marshall Islands residents were exposed to radioactive fallout from the U.S. hydrogen bomb test code-named "Bravo," which was conducted on March 1, 1954, in the island nation's Bikini Atoll. The Japanese tuna fishing boat Fukuryu Maru No. 5 was also exposed to the fallout.

Loeak is likely to visit Japan from Feb. 12 to 16 and plans to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in the western Japan city, Japanese and Marshall Islands sources said, adding the president is also expected to hold talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during the visit.

In the talks, the two leaders

Woman in fake marriage found guilty

A federal jury has found a woman guilty of conspiring with a man and other persons to defraud U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services by engaging in a sham marriage.

After deliberating for a few hours, the 12 jurors reached a unanimous verdict finding Xiaoying Tang guilty of conspiracy to defraud the U.S., visa fraud, and false statement.

Tang will be sentenced on June 20, 2014. She was allowed to remain free until her sentencing date, under the same terms and conditions of her pre-trial release.

The trial began on Monday. Assistant U.S. attorneys Ross Naughton and Garth Backe, as counsel for the U.S. government, called in six witnesses and rested their case Tuesday afternoon.

Joseph Horrey, court-appointed counsel for Tang, allowed the defendant to testify on Tuesday afternoon. The defense did not call any other witnesses.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona presided over the case.

The indictment charged Tang and Jesse Juan Teigita Dowai with conspiracy to commit visa

hind the recommendation to revise the electric residential customer block, the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission ap-

proved the plan on Monday in hopes that the new structure will help the utilities agency raise the revenue it needs for operational improvements.

From four classifications under the existing customer block, CUC will soon implement a new setup that reduces the blocks to three.

Residential power customers will soon be classified as those using 0 to 350 kilowatt-hours per month. The previous block was 0-500 kWh/month.

The two other blocks are those using 351 to 1,200 kWh per month and those using 1,200 above per kWh per month.

The new structure is similar to the residential rate blocks at Maui Electric in Hawaii, which

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The new structure is similar to the residential rate blocks at Maui Electric in Hawaii, which

proved the plan on Monday in hopes that the new structure will help the utilities agency raise the revenue it needs for operational improvements.

From four classifications under the existing customer block, CUC will soon implement a new setup that reduces the blocks to three.

Residential power customers will soon be classified as those using 0 to 350 kilowatt-hours per month. The previous block was 0-500 kWh/month.

The two other blocks are those using 351 to 1,200 kWh per month and those using 1,200 above per kWh per month.

The new structure is similar to the residential rate blocks at Maui Electric in Hawaii, which

is the same size as CUC.

Over the last eight years, CUC experienced a dramatic decline in electricity usage due primarily to increases in the cost of diesel fuel used by the corporation to generate electricity.

It was disclosed that in 2006, there were approximately 12,500 residential customers who used about 134 million kWh. By 2013, CUC's residential clientele declined to about 11,000 and kilowatt-hour usage also went down to about 56 million.

In 2006, the average residential customer used about 895 kWh per month but in 2013 the average usage was down to about 350 kWh per month.

During Monday's hearing, CUC chief financial officer

Charles Warren disclosed that the ultimate rationale behind the changes in the structure is to "capture the average power users of CUC." He revealed that the existing customer block was set years ago when average power users were using 570 kWh per month.

CPUC member Dave Guerrero earlier asked if the revision has got something to do with Saipan "subsidizing" both Tinian and Rota customers. Warren, however, explained that regardless of what rate structure is in effect for CUC customers, Saipan users have always been subsidizing the two islands' customers due to the higher cost of producing power for both.

Based on the supplemental information from CUC, the

kWh usage and the number of customers whose usage ended in the first block (0-500 kWh per month) increased from about 60 percent to almost 74 percent over the last four years.

Also, for over 2,000 kWh per month users, kWh usage declined from over 7 percent to 3.8 percent over the four-year period and the number of customers that consume more than 2,000 kWh per month declined by 50 percent from 2 percent to just over 1 percent.

CUC is concerned that it would be unable to collect its revenue requirement with the current blocks because the revised rates at each level would cause further declines in usage and revenue.

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4 schools sign up for Pacific Real World Design Challenge

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Four groups from the Commonwealth's public and private high schools have so far signed up for this year's Pacific Real World Design Challenge, where they will compete to represent the Pacific region at the national competition.

The Real World Design Challenge, or RWDC, is an annual competition that provides high school students the opportunity to work on real world engineering challenges in a team environment.

Jeaniffer H. Cubangbang, M.Ed, Public School System's Instructional Technology Program Coordinator, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that competitors from the CNMI include defending champion Marianas High School's Aeronautical Dolphins, Saipan Southern High School, Tinian Junior & Senior High School, and the Saipan International School.

The four groups will compete with participants from Guam

and American Samoa. The winner will advance and represent the region at the nationals.

Cubangbang said this year's RWDC challenge will focus on the design and implementation of unmanned aircraft systems to support precision agriculture, specifically the monitoring and assessment of crop conditions to achieve increased yield.

MHS' Aeronautical Dolphins was last year's national champion, besting winners in 50 states in the U.S.

Cubangbang is confident in the performance of CNMI students this year. "As the 2013 National Winner of last year's RWDC national competition, I believe our students will have a high success rate in moving to the national competition, which has been moved to November instead of April."

The CNMI is the only U.S. territory that has won a national championship in this competition.

Cubangbang said the four schools that registered will compete in both the CNMI islandwide level and Pacific region level.

"All RWDC competition notebooks are submitted to me

and directly to RWDC. RWDC judges the Pacific state entries in which the CNMI competes directly with Guam and American Samoa. RWDC sends winners a trophy and pays for winners to compete in the national competition," she said.

Schools or clubs can register for the state competition until Feb. 21. Deadline for submission of their competition notebook is on March 31. Winners will be announced by RWDC on April 20.

PSS will also announce the islandwide winners where the first to third place winners will receive certificates and medals.

Each year, student teams competing in RWDC will be asked to address a challenge that confronts the nation's leading industries. Students will use professional engineering software to develop their solutions and will also generate presentations that convincingly demonstrate the value of their solutions. The RWDC provides students with opportunities to apply the lessons of the classroom to the technical problems that are being faced in the workplace.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Island Thyme Band's Keoni Borja, left, and John Ulrich perform during Coffee & Jazz's Open Mic Night Sundays last weekend.

Coffee & Jazz welcomes local performers twice a week

A number of local musicians have found a new home at Coffee & Jazz, with the watering hole on the second floor of the ABC Building in Garapan featuring them twice a week.

Operations manager Kayoko "Kay" Irinaka said Coffee & Jazz now hosts homebred musical talents through their Thursday Island Jazz Night and Open Mic Night Sundays.

"We actually started doing this in November last year with the jazz band Project Blue. They performed here for about a month every Thursday and Sunday."

After the band's contract with the bar ended, one of Project Blue's members, John Ulrich, decided to stay and eventually formed his own band, the Island Thyme Band.

"We actually never stopped Thursday and Sunday night

local performances. Later on we started to be recognized by other musicians and they started to come in and joined our twice-weekly gigs. Sometimes whoever is available just stops by and performs. We have anywhere from five to seven musicians at times performing on stage and it sounds amazing."

Irinaka said Coffee & Jazz's regulars seem to enjoy Island Thyme Band's relaxing and cozy island-style jazz music. Aside from doing several reggae covers, Ulrich and company also perform original songs.

The five-member Island Thyme Band has a saxophone player, a piano player, a ukulele player, and a guitar and bass player.

With the success of Thursday Island Jazz Night, Irinaka said the next challenge for

Coffee & Jazz is the successful promotion of its Open Mic Night Sundays.

"Open Mic Night Sundays is another challenge for us, but so far we are the only venue doing this event for people who want to have an opportunity to show off their talent like singing, reading poetry, doing stand-up comedy, etc."

Coffee & Jazz comfortably seats 40 people and is open from 11am to 11pm everyday of the week. It is also open for private party functions for a minimum reservation of \$500 consumable food and drinks. The place boasts of high-tech sound systems and lighting.

Coffee & Jazz is planning more theme party events in the future.

For more information or for reservations, call Coffee & Jazz at 233-7722. *(Mark Rabago)*

53 instructors at NMC for spring term

The Northern Marianas College disclosed yesterday that despite some unfilled vacancies in the instructional faculty positions, there remains a good number of instructors that have been hired for this new semester.

Barbara Merfalen, NMC dean of Academic Programs and Services, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that NMC has a total of 53 instructors to date. This pool is composed of 31 full-time faculty and 22 adjunct faculty members.

"We were able to fill key instructor positions prior to the start of the semester, and classes are progressing well into the

second week of instruction," said Merfalen, adding that she's extremely glad about the high level of interest that the college received in response to instructor recruitment efforts.

There are a couple of instructor vacancies, however, within the Nursing and the School of Education departments that are currently in the process of being filled.

"We are at the interview stages of these vacancies and expect to conclude the hiring process soon," said Merfalen.

According to her, all instructors teaching at NMC meet or exceed the minimum faculty

qualifications policy that was adopted last year in response to the recommendation by the External Evaluation Team of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College.

Based on the newly approved policy, NMC will give primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline that the faculty member will teach.

NMC reported that it has about 1,101 full-time students as of Jan. 29, 2014. This is slightly fewer—6 percent—than the same semester last year. *(Moneth G. Deposa)*

POI Aviation invites qualified individuals to apply for the following positions:

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High school diploma or its equivalent with 4 years experience as a cargo handler.

Manager, Aircraft Maintenance & GSE (1)
Associate's degree in Aviation Maintenance Engineering with 10 years of progressive work experience as a licensed A&P Technician and 2 years work experience as auto and diesel mechanic. Must possess a current U.S. FAA A&P license.

Manager, Ramp & Flight Operations (1)
Associate's degree with 8 years progressive airline ramp operations and flight dispatch experience. Minimum 3 years work experience in ramp operations supervisory capacity. Must possess a current U.S. FAA license as Aircraft Dispatcher.

Ramp Agent (1)
High school diploma or its equivalent with 2 years work experience in the airline industry in relations to ramp cargo loading and unloading operations.

Senior Load Planning Specialist (1)
Associate's degree with 4 years of aircraft ramp operation experience with specific airline certification as a load planner.

DEADLINE: JANUARY 30, 2014

Applications for Employment are available at the Human Resources Department located at the POI Aviation Building on International Terminal LP, Saipan International Airport.

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Saipan Shrimp & Broodstock Co., Ltd. is inviting qualified individuals to apply for the following position:

Aquaculture Farmer

Job duties: Feeding and monitoring of live aquatic animals, cleaning of tanks, weighing of feeds, harvesting and packing, nighttime monitoring, grounds maintenance and other related jobs.

Job requirements: High school graduate, in good physical and health condition, able to lift up to 60lbs., knowledge of basic mathematical calculations. Must be willing to work night shifts, be a team player and with good working attitude.

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Job duties: Planning and production of at least 500,000 shrimp larvae every month. Work involves shrimp broodstock selection, maturation and conditioning, breeding and larval rearing. The supervisor is also in charge in the scheduling and delegation of work to aquaculture farmers.

Job requirements: At least 2 years experience in actual L. vannamei hatchery operations. A degree in aquaculture or related field an advantage. Willing to be on call 24 hours. Good in oral and written communication and should be literate in MS Word and Excel spreadsheets.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at the Saipan Shrimp & Broodstock Co., Ltd. Human Resources Office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Thursday, February 13, 2014.

Saipan Shrimp & Broodstock Co., Ltd. is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified women, minorities and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

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PRO SE

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

In The Matter Of)
The Adoption Of:) FCD AD
K. L. (09/11/2000),) CIVIL ACTION
A. A. M. (09/04/2002),) NO. 14-0043
D. M. (08/20/2003),)
K. M. (12/01/2004),) **NOTICE OF**
R. M. (05/23/2006)) **HEARING**

Minor Children,)

By:)

Maria Lourdes)
Olopai Laniyo)
Petitioner)

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on March 17, 2014 at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 205A, before the Honorable Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 28th day of January, 2014.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

JOE HILL, Esq.,
HILL LAW OFFICES
P.O. Box 500917, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 234-6806/7743
FAX: (670) 234-7753

Attorney for Petitioner

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

GILDA E. ESCAMILLA-JALMAS) FCD DI
Petitioner.) CIVIL
versus) ACTION
JOSE JALMAS JR.,) NO. 13-0462
Respondent)
) SUMMONS

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Petition for Divorce which is given you herewith, within thirty (30) days after service of this Summons upon you. YOUR ANSWER SHOULD BE IN WRITING and filed with the Clerk of Court, Guma' Hustisia, Imwal Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500917, Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950 and served upon petitioner's counsel, Atty. Joe Hill, P.O. Box 500917, Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Petition for Divorce. By order of the above Court:

Dated this 26th day of September 2013.

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

Daynos, Granado reassigned to new Saipan parishes

By THOMAS A. MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

The Diocese of Chalan Kanoa announced last Sunday the reassignment of two pastors to San Vicente Church on Saipan and Mount Carmel Cathedral.

Fr. Florentino "Tinong" Daynos II, who arrived on Saipan last October, will be the parochial vicar of Mount Carmel Cathedral and the hospital chaplain.

Daynos comes to his new calling from the Diocese of Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines. Immediately after arriving on Saipan he has helped with conducting Masses at the San Vicente parish and other parishes. He was also appointed as the spiritual director of the Legion of Mary.

As the parochial vicar of Mount Carmel Cathedral, Daynos will be involved in the liturgical and overall pas-

toral life, according to Fr. Ryan Jimenez, the Apostolic

Administrator for the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa. Daynos will also begin preparing young adults and adults to receive the sacraments of initiation beginning this year's Lenten season.

Daynos will also be visiting inmates and presiding over

Masses at the Saipan prison.

Fr. Jason A. Granado, from the Archdiocese of Agana, Guam, will be the parochial administrator of San Vicente Parish on Saipan. Archbishop Anthony Apuron, according to Jimenez, has allowed Granado to serve on Saipan.

"I am excited," Granado said. "I hope to get to know

the people of Saipan and do the will of God. I think that is something all pastors believe in—announcing Jesus Christ."

Granado shared that his main goal as a new pastor on Saipan is to "spread the love of Jesus to all."

Both priests will officially take their place on Feb. 8. In related news, Fr. Kenneth Hezel, S.J., Lay Ministry coordinator, will continue to oversee Kristo Rai parish in Garapan.

"I thank Fr. Daynos, Fr. Granado, and Fr. Hezel for their willingness to take on this responsibility. I encourage parishioners of their respective parishes to work closely with them," Jimenez said. "After all, the Church is the people of God, the parish belongs to the people, and the priests assigned every certain period of time are there to lead and guide the people."



Jimenez

Marianas Eye Institute's mobile clinic 'doing well'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Marianas Eye Institute's mobile clinic has been a boon not only to the Beach Road eye clinic but also to community members who don't have easy access to transportation but still need to have their eyes examined.

"The mobile clinic is doing quite well. It's been a big help as it allows us to bring eye exams out to the community," said MEI founder Dr. David Khorram. "We did this because gas prices were rising and a lot of people just weren't able to come here. So we decided to go to them. It really improved the access."

Aside from residents of Kagman, San Roque, and other relatively far-flung villages from Garapan, MEI's mobile clinic can also be utilized for companies or organizations that simply want their employees' and members' vision checked at one time.

"If you want to organize something within your company or organization, let us know and we can come over. Our motto is 'You call, we come!'" said Khorram.

MEI CEO Russ Quinn said the mobile clinic was built a year ago and is a retrofitted Tasi Tour bus.

"We gutted it and basically rebuilt it from the inside out to accommodate equipment and be a complete eye exam lane. We did this so we would be able to conduct eye exams on location and where there is no ideal situation for someone to take an eye exam, we're able to take the exam to him or her. We go around the island if someone has a conference or a hotel or a big business wants not to disrupt business and just let their employees do their eye exam out there, we're able to do that."

Aside from schools, the mobile clinic has also visited the Nutrition Assistance Program or food stamp building in As Lito and has also serviced clients in Kagman, Quinn said.

Khorram reminded the community that MEI honors Medicaid recipients again after problems collecting from the government forced the eye clinic to stop receiving Medicaid clients in the past.

"Medicaid is welcome! For sometime we we're not able to provide glasses to the Medicaid population because of some difficulties with cash flow at the Medicaid office," he said. "I want to encourage our congressmen to continue to fund the Medicaid office. It remains underfunded. [In] most states in the U.S., a third of their budget is dedicated to Medicaid and here it's about 5 percent or less. Please keep that in mind because the health of the island depends on it, especially as more people are filing for Medicaid."

Even as MEI unveiled its expanded optical showroom last month, Quinn said the company is getting by amidst the slow-recovering local economy.

"Business is a little bit slow. It could always be better. I feel like we're working out in just keeping our name out there and letting people know that it's important to get annual exams, especially with the diabetic population. So we really try to educate people about that. Plus, we've been recog-



MARK RABAGO

The Marianas Eye Institute's mobile clinic used to be a Tasi Tour bus that was gutted from the inside out to accommodate equipment for a complete eye exam lane.

nized as the diabetic eye care center in the CNMI."

Meanwhile, Quinn said it would probably be awhile before the MEI and other health

providers in the CNMI feel the full brunt of the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare.

"Right now I think nobody knows how Obamacare is going

to affect any of us. We're doing business as usual until we kind of know how it's going to affect the CNMI. At some point it will reach our shores but,

as of right now, looks like the CNMI is not yet there. 2014 may be the year will see it but we don't anticipate it affecting us in a negative way."

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Small craft advisory now in effect

The CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management issued a small craft advisory yesterday afternoon to warn of hazardous conditions for operators of small craft.

According to the advisory, combined seas of 10 to 11 feet and fresh to strong trade winds will produce hazardous conditions for small craft through Thursday night.

Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are expected to persist overnight into Thursday morning.

The small craft advisory is now in effect until 6am Friday.

A previous high surf advisory is now cancelled.

Winds of 12 to 17 mph and seas of 10 to 11 feet will produce conditions hazardous to operators of small craft. Winds

and seas are expected to subside by early Friday morning.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in these conditions.

If travel by boat is necessary, exercise caution especially near reef lines and when entering or leaving harbors and inlets. Avoid venturing near exposed reefs and beaches, especially those along north and northeast facing reefs as rip currents is life threatening. (PR)



COLOR GUARD DUTIES

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Manta Ray Battalion performs color guard duties at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2014 Board of Directors Installation Dinner on Jan. 25, 2014, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan. From left to right: C/LTC Donna Pascual, C/CPT Amante Andrada, C/Sgt. 1st Class Class Ayana Ongelungel, C/CSM Kenneth Catilo, C/CPT Condrad Calub, C/MAJ Joann Bandalas, and C/CPT Lizel Bandalas.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Battalion Color Guard performs posting and retiring of colors during the Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2014 Board of Directors Installation Dinner on Jan. 25, 2014 at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Seen here are former Saipan Southern High School cadets Tiana Reyes and Cassandra Royal singing the U.S. and CNMI anthems.



MONETH G. DEPOSA

SPELLING BEE CHAMPS

The Top 3 winners of the PSS State Spelling Bee. From left are third placer AJ Samonte, champion Holly Sarah Liban, and second placer Marian Miranda. The three are the official PSS representatives to the Guam regional spelling competition set for March this year.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 30, 2006

'Autonomous no more'

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will cease to be an autonomous agency and will instead become a division of the Department of Public Works when Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's first executive order becomes effective in two months. Executive Order 2006-1, which forms part of Fitial's government reorganization plan, will abolish the CUC board of directors and transfer its functions to DPW. Pursuant to the order, CUC will be headed by a chief executive officer, rather than an executive director. He or she will have the rank of

a division director.

Hotel occupancy drops but room rates slightly improve

The CNMI's hotel occupancy rate averaged 70.16 percent in 2005—a figure that the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands claims as not profitable for most local hotels—even as the average monthly room rate for the year improved to \$84.54. HANMI statistics showed the occupancy rate drop slightly from the 2004 average of 71.75 percent. Except for the 2004 average, the 2005 figure appeared to be the highest average occupancy rate for the past seven years, but it

settled way below record highs of 85.57 and 81.35 percent in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

January 30, 2007

Illegal aliens face crackdown

The CNMI government is stepping up efforts to crack down on overstaying foreign workers, amid threat of a federal takeover of the Commonwealth's immigration system. The Department of Labor will publish this week a list of nonresident workers who are illegally staying in the Commonwealth. The public notice will carry a warning for employers not to hire or employ any of the listed individuals for any position, including household or domestic positions. Press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr. said the "no-hire list" includes approximately 1,000 individuals from Bangladesh, China, Japan, Korea, the Philip-

ines, and Thailand, among other countries. These are nonresident workers whose contracts have expired and who failed to find new jobs within the 45-day transfer period, but continue to remain in the Commonwealth.

All three gray prepositioning ships leave NMI

All three Military Sealift Command's prepositioning ships left Saipan last week for redeployment, according to the Marine Safety Detachment yesterday. Lt. Gregory J. Schultz, Marine Safety Detachment supervisor, told *Saipan Tribune* that the MSC's gray hulls were given a new mission and redeployed. Schultz said he is not aware of the ships' specific mission and their new assignment. There was also no word if the three gray ships that left will be replaced. "They all basically left but all the black hulls are still

here. They are going to stay here as far as I know," he said. Schultz said those three gray hulls are under contract by the United States Army.

January 30, 2008

476 aliens, 98 locals now jobless

A total of 476 alien workers and 98 resident workers on Saipan became jobless in January alone following the shutdown of four garment factories. Most foreign garment workers opted to stay and look for jobs in the CNMI, according to Labor records. Most of these workers are Chinese. In the latest case, the closure of garment manufacturer Poong-In Saipan Inc. in Afetnas on Monday rendered 105 alien workers jobless. Labor investigator Carlos Camacho told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that only 42 of Poong-In's guest

workers expressed intention to leave the island. Camacho said that Poong-In's workers also include 20 citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Bishop to retire on his 75th birthday

Bishop Tomas A. Camacho of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa will be stepping down as the highest ranking prelate on the islands this September, when he celebrates his 75th birthday. The regulations regarding Church governance, known as Canon Law, require a diocesan bishop who has completed his 75th year of age, to offer his resignation from office to the Holy Father in Rome. Pursuant to this provision of Canon Law, Camacho said he will submit his letter of resignation to Pope Benedict on his 75th birthday, Sept. 18, 2008. Camacho said he will relinquish his position as bishop.

'Uncle' Dave: Service should be at the heart of every Rotarian

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The charter president of the Rotary Club of Saipan, "Uncle Dave" M. Sablan, took the podium yesterday at their weekly meeting at the Hyatt Regency Saipan that also saw the civic organization welcoming prospective members.

Sablan, who became a Rotary member in Guam in 1957 and helped found the local group in 1968, said that service to the community was ingrained in him during the club's formative years.

Months after the organization received its charter, Typhoon Jean hit the Marianas and forced the fledgling club into action to try to help people who were devastated by the natural calamity.

"We were just starting then and we had 31 members. We needed some money to help the community recover from the typhoon. We wrote to every Rotary Club that we have addresses, including the Rotary International, asking them for money."

He got a resounding "no" on his request for monetary handouts from off-island Rotary



Rotary Club of Saipan charter president David "Uncle Dave" M. Sablan shared his experience founding the club in 1968 during yesterday's meeting at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Clubs—and for good reason.

"Believe it or not my hands were slapped. They said 'don't make it habit to ask for money because money is not every-

thing in Rotary.' Instead they said 'you are very welcome to write to us and tell us what you want. Do you want a dental chair? Write to the various clubs

that you know, write to Rotary International, put in the [Rotary] magazine what you need, who you are, and where you come from.' So these are the things

that the Rotary can do."

Sablan and company followed the advice and, true enough, the local club eventually got what it wanted in the form of 12 tons of clothing from Hawaii via a military C-130.

"We did receive from money, mostly from Japan and Guam. We took that money and we bought portable cement mixers, lumber and we sent a large number of that to Tinian and Rota to rehabilitate themselves."

Another anecdote he shared was the time he became an honorary Texan by simply fulfilling his duties for the club.

"I've been in various positions in Rotary aside from being president of the Saipan Rotary. I was a treasurer in Guam. I was also very active in community services. I have a flag at home, the flag of the state of Texas, that the base commander of Andersen Air Force Base gave to me in the 1960s when they celebrated a Texas holiday of some sort."

He narrated that he was involved in the Battle of San Jacinto Day celebrations at the U.S. military facility as a member of the Rotary Club. As a re-

sult of his involvement, he was given a plaque from Texas Gov. John Connally that made him an honorary Texan.

"This is what happens when you join the Rotary Club. You don't know what you're going into and before you know it you're guilty. I'm guilty," he quipped.

Sablan told Rotary members and prospective members that, as Rotarians and future Rotarians, they shouldn't be afraid to ask for outside help.

"Let's not confine ourselves to the limited capability of our club. Let's go out and tap the people throughout the world because we are an international organization. Let's use that to advance ourselves, find the need, and try to finish [what we started]."

Before ending his testimonial, Sablan urged the current leadership of the Rotary to grow the membership as well as continue the group's legacy of service to the CNMI.

"I just hope we continue to increase membership because Rotary is really an organization that helps the community, helps the people, and helps the children."

Bordallo statement on the State of the Union

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU) issued yesterday the following statement after attending a joint session of Congress to receive President Obama's State of the Union address. She was joined by Lt. Joseph Crisostomo, USAF, who viewed the address from the House Gallery as her guest. Crisostomo is a former resident of Barrigada and graduated from George Washington High School in 2002. He was nominated by Bordallo to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy and was commissioned as an officer in the Air Force in 2010. Crisostomo was invited to be Bordallo's guest as a gesture of gratitude to all the men and women from Guam who serve in the Armed Forces.

"Tonight, President Obama outlined his Administration's priorities to grow our economy, strengthen the middle class, and ensure that all Americans have an equal opportunity to get ahead. The President emphasized the need for Congress to take action on a number of policy priorities, including immigration reform, income inequality, infrastructure investments, and college affordability. However, the President stated that he will not wait for congressional action to make progress on these issues, and will take executive action where he can due to gridlock in Congress.

"Congress must also do its part to address the many challenges that continue to face our country. Although we have made progress in turning our economy around and improving the quality of life for millions of Americans, much work remains. Unemployment [in]



Lt. Joseph Crisostomo, USAF, joins Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU) in the House Chamber during President Obama's fifth State of the Union address. Crisostomo was invited to be Bordallo's guest as a gesture of gratitude to all the men and women from Guam who serve in the Armed Forces.

Guam is nearly twice the national average, and I continue to work to find economic opportunities for the people of Guam. The President's continued support for the Asia-Pacific rebalance will help provide job opportunities as well as strengthen regional prosperity and stability. I will also continue to work with officials to open up additional tourism opportunities under the Guam-CNMI visa waiver program. I look forward to working with President Obama and my colleagues in Congress to move these issues forward." (PR)

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam Democrats react to Obama speech

The Democratic Party of Guam issued the following statement yesterday in response to President Obama's State of the Union Address:

Democratic Party chair Sen. Rory J. Respicio stated: "I am pleased that President Obama's State of the Union speech focused on the struggles of everyday Americans and we commend the President for highlighting one of the great issues of our times—rising income inequality in our country. Despite economic growth, this growing inequality is a continuing burden for all working families, and disproportionately falls on women in the workforce.

"As we focus on the Hay Study plan before us for government of Guam workers, we must also be mindful of our

private sector workforce and the need for parity in wages. We have to bridge that gap and address this growing disparity.

"I also was glad that President Obama touched on voter reform. This has been an issue I have fought for as legislative oversight over election reform. I agree with President Obama that the outcome of democratically-held elections should be determined by the power of the vote, and not by who has the most money."

Democratic Party vice chair Nerissa Underwood also stated: "The President's new push to make high-quality pre-K available to every 4-year-old is important. If we can make this happen this will not only improve opportunities for our children but will help our economy as well."

Respicio added: "Overall the President's speech made me proud of our country and proud to be a Democrat. The President's message focused on empowering citizens to participate in strengthening our economy, as well as providing support for entrepreneurs and opportunity for all Americans.

"Like President Obama, we see the same parallels here on our island and in the principles of our Democratic Party of Guam. Like President Obama, we believe in the need for bipartisanship in all that we do to provide opportunities for all Guamanians, and not just a select few."

Underwood added: "Also like the President and our fellow Democrats, we believe in the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings." (PR)

NMC 5th Annual Health Fair on Feb. 15

To increase awareness about healthy lifestyle habits and practices, the Northern Marianas College's Nursing Club is inviting members in the community to the 5th Annual Health Fair on Feb. 15, 2014, a Saturday, from 8am to 3pm at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

The Health Fair is supported with the assistance from the CNMI Area Health Education Center, Bridge Capital LLC, Star Water Inc., and other NMC and community volunteers.

Health fair activities will run from 8am until 3pm and will also feature a 5K Walk starting at 6am. The first 20 participants who finish the 5K Walk will also receive T-shirt prizes. Entrance to the Health Fair and the 5K Walk is free.

In addition to the exhibits and information booths, there will be presentations from organizations like NMC Cooperative Research Extension and Educational Services. Other activities include a CPR demonstration by the American Red Cross, a Boxersize

class by Trench Tech, and a Zumba class by Gold's Gym.

Those who attend the Health Fair can also avail to free health services including free flu immunizations, screenings for blood pressure and blood glucose levels, as well as free HIV and STD testing and counseling. Participants will also be able to purchase healthy drinks and snacks from Tropical Blendz, and try samples from Subway and Foremost.

Participants may also purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win prizes like free dental cleanings from Seventh Day Adventist Dental Clinic, Pacific Islands Club waterpark passes, gas vouchers at Shell from IP&E, and other prizes from other companies in the community. Funds raised will be donated to NMC's Nursing Club to purchase lancets and other supplies used for community service projects.

For additional information about the NMC Health Fair, contact the NMC Nursing Club at 237-6741/6743 or visit www.marianas.edu. (NMC)

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

A special happy birthday greeting goes out to an adorable little girl who



turns 5 today! Happy birthday, Aidin Benavente Tagabue!! May you be blessed with many more birthdays to come! You are such a blessing

who brings so much joy and color into all our lives! Enjoy your special day! We love you love always! Greetings come from Nino Charisma!



Happy birthday to Mr. James Lee! Wishing you many more birthdays to come! Greetings come from friends.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Obama's war is on income inequality

Fifty years ago, Lyndon Johnson used his first State of the Union address to declare a war on poverty. At that time, 19 percent of Americans lived below the poverty line. Thanks to the programs created during Johnson's war—including Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps and Head Start, among others—poverty was cut by one quarter over three years.

Today, at 16 percent, the poverty rate is just three percentage points below 1964's high-water mark; the United States now has 11 million more people living in poverty than it did 50 years ago.

Tuesday night, during his State of the Union address, President Obama delivered what many might consider a system upgrade—version 2.0 of the war on poverty. This one is likely to be called the War on Income Inequality, in which Obama echoed many of the themes he explored in a speech last month at the Center for American Progress, when he talked about income inequality as the defining challenge of our time. This is a compelling theme, and one that most of us can probably relate to. For example, since 1979, our economy has doubled in size, but all the money is going to fewer and fewer people.

Workers are 90 percent more productive than in 1979, but we earn just less than 8 percent more. It's harder to move up the ladder, since much of that ladder is sunk in the swamp of low-wage work. To sum up: The rich keep getting richer, and the rest of us are getting poorer.

This disparity is damaging not only to hardworking families, but to the founding spirit of our country, where we are all created equal, with a level playing field for opportunity.

We are encouraged that the public conversation about poverty has been elevated—even Republicans are talking about it—and even more encouraged at the volume of conversation about raising the minimum wage, and about extending unemployment benefits (which failed in the Senate just a few short weeks ago, before they went on break). Clearly even more is needed.

But if "income inequality" becomes the new version of the war on poverty, we fear that some things may get left behind, and that the full plight of the 47 million people living in poverty may get overlooked. For one thing, there's a greater chance that the volatile political battles that now curdle any substantive discussion of problems will quickly turn the equality issue into claims that "Obama is a socialist." For another, both inequality and poverty are hugely complex issues, and they are clearly interrelated. But the factors contributing to poverty can't be reduced to income alone.

Lyndon Johnson understood this. His State of the Union address included these words:

"Very often a lack of jobs and money is not the cause of poverty, but the symptom. The cause may lie deeper in our failure to give our fellow citizens a fair chance to develop their own capacities, in a lack of education and training, in a lack of medical care and housing, in a lack of decent communities in which to live and bring up their children."

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Hemingwei closes out the Year of the Snake

Let me deal first with the name, *Hemingwei* (he = gentle, ming = regal, wei = YES, by my translation). My students named me this after recollecting Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, which China students study in high school. I consented since the main character in the novel is Santiago, Spain's patron saint, St. James. Jaime is another word for James.

The Year of the Snake ends today in the Chinese lunar calendar before tomorrow's Year of the Horse. Hemingwei has become a comfortable appellation I widely used last year as a teacher at Shenyang Aerospace University. At the termination of the SAU contract, and being out of the university setting that provided a meaningful context to the name, I need to decide what to do with it.

Of the year, there is no quarrel. Malevolence and cattiness are qualities of the snake year in Chinese horoscopy. A woman under the sign is known to be irritable, highly suspicious of others' aims and frequently jealous when others seems to supersede her sense of status and amount of attainment. She overdoes things, preferring her own judgment, and expressing doubts on those of others. Outwardly courteous with polite manners, she is headstrong and willful in personal relationships resulting in frequent stress and strain between love and beloved. This is not the only characterization of the year but it came close to my experience so I am not at all hesitant to let it go.

Being in the culture of harmonious balance and not making too sharp a dichotomy in the seemingly unbridgeable gulf between what-is and what-is-not, I will treasure this year's name of Hemingwei, but for now, graciously chuck the Year of the Snake a pleasant *adieu*.

I use all the foregoing and following metaphors to explain what I choose to perceive, not to depict a situation of determinism where somehow events are either beholden to the location of the stars in the sky, or on the qualities of 12 symbolized animals of segments in a cyclical year, even with the added details of an expansion of their qualities on the month, day, and hour's animal designation. China in the olden days had too many sages doing nothing but swirling in their elite minds interlocking animal qualities to chart a person's fate and destiny in their view of the nature of things.

After seeing them at work in Hong Kong at the turn of the Gregorian calendar this year, the sages of geomancy and astrology are wealthy and highly regarded feng shui consultants, treasured in HK for their cultural continuity to dynastic Han China and their perceived commercial value. NewsAsia out of Singapore even have them in their newscast in the waning days of this lunar year. I am not much of an admirer of their alleged wisdom nor see much of the

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.



practicality of their sage.

But, as all of human life finally hinges on the telling, perspective and narrative take commanding roles. How one decides to look at things is more often indicative of the meaning of the message rather than the objective content of what is being noticed.

Take as an example China's GDP at the end of this year. It was the lowest in the slowdown of growth in more than a decade. That's one view. The other is that it still registered the fastest growth rate among all the economies around the world bar none, and is projected to continue to do so for a time to come. In the volatile stock market of the world's exchanges, many scaled down their exposure in investments of previous years on the China market after chucking in their gains, while others increased theirs in recognition that it may be the only viable income-generating game in town. Take your pick.

This gets me back to *Hemingwei*. The meaning I offered above from the literal equivalence of every syllable is not the only meaning available in Hanyu Pinyin. First, there are four tones in the phonetics of the language, so we already have four separate meanings for each of the three syllables, not to mention separate meanings even with the same tone! Accompanying each of them is an ideogram or pictograph written in squared characters, put together to arrive at a meaning from varied symbols that have an independent meaning of their own. We are dealt an altogether different animal at every tone depending on the starting radical in each of the syllable. In short, there is no one meaning either of the spoken name or the written characters. This holds true in the meaning of my adapted name *Hemingwei*. The meaning of a word in any language is in its use, and usage is simply a matter of choice!

Obviously, I am limited in the printing of the *putunghua* characters here but doing an exposition of just the word *hemingwei* alone will most likely result in a medieval tome. So, I will not even bother attempting that. As for the Year of the Snake, I am unequivocal. In my best serpentine grease to the ophidian creature, "I am glad to see you go!" I hope to hitch a healthy ride on the gallop of next year's horse.

Asuntun Natibu

By **JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.



Guaha siha asuntu dumibidi tautau-ta deste alacha. Mau-leg ta atetuye dumeskute gi hilu` pinasensia pot para tana` klaru hafa i asuntu.

I priniponen Kilili` para una` fan sudadanon Ameri-kano 14-mit na tautau hiyuñg mampos ha estotba sensian natibu punta pot punta.

I chathinassu gaige gi un` sakudida `nai siempre u matulaika dis-
posision asuntun direchon natibu gumubietnan maisague`. I nuebu na para umana` fan sudadano siempre u minanda mona linala` na-tibu. Kau mañgontentu hamyu nu este na malaintension?

Siñaha` ti justifikau i mina` añau pot areglu `sino haf` na tampen sinetnan. Lau para hafa na ta babaye chalan destrosiun natibu gi halom mismu lugatña?

Huñgan, man-mauleg i natibu na tautague kumu mañgilisyanu. Lau `nai esta para un` dispone halom gima` mame, un` ratu ha` sa` inipos sage` ennau na finaisen. Finenenia i nesessidat yan interes familia immidiatmente antes de otu.

Mauleg i Delegadu as Kilili` u ta` lun humusga haye ha repre-senta: Natibu ni pumegague` gi puestoña pat i 14-mit na tautau hiyuñg? Manu `nai gaige sinsiyu sensian kinimitimu gi pisun dignu

na modun representasion? Manu gi destrosiu na propositu ni un` chochoneg `nai gaige interest natibu?

SCC: Otru interes

Sumisiha gi mapos na semana i kabesanten Saipan Chamber of Commerce as Alex Sablan yan si Kilili umabiba para umana` fan sudadanu 14-mit na tautau hiyuñg.

Parehu mafama asuntu siha ni sumen chagu` yan interes natibu. Lau oppan ma-abiba interes tautau hiyuñg. Komprendiyon.

I Saipan Chamber of Commerce ayu ha` `nai siña hana` baratu i sueddu `an gaige i tautau hiyuñg. Para ennau na empleau uttimu suspiros ayu na ti mikampu `an ma-offrese pot para u saga.

Gi mismu tiempu `nai sumaga, ha displanta tautau tanu`. Dispu-es, doble trabut sa` pot guiya na ti siña mahatsa i sueddu sa` mattu papa` gi sueddon atu` ase. Dos dañu este i yumayamag appottunidat natibu. Estague` kase na animu si Alex Sablan chumoneg i para u fan masede 14-mit na tautau hiyuñg.

Mauleg ta rikunose este i dos pairen tautau hiyuñg pot para ta husga publikamente haf` na mampos mantomtum gi gaseta lau ti me` nan i tautau ni makeke destrosia.

Bisnis kontra sueddu

I Saipan Chamber of Commerce komprendiyon posisiona kontra mahatsan sueddu: ma`añau maliñgu ganansia. Taya` `nai gaige kualidat linala` gi hutnaleros ni ha emplelea. I betsan niha mas yamo` nana gi dibaten sueddu.

Haf` na `an kahulu` hinemlu` i ekonomia tatnai talie` gi san-mena ha annunsia na pot mas guaha ganansia listugue` muna` fan man-age empleau siha? Pa`gu sa` mas bahu i kinalamten, para u choneg ma-utut mas i sueddu gi ora? Kau estake sueddon esklabu `nai u satisfechu i komunidan bisnis?

Fan man-atan gi hilu` sensian kilisyanu sa` tautau i in` emplelea. Ti makenaria ennau siha na tauatu i man-gaige gi industrial hotel

yan otu siha bisnis. Tautau ni man-gai nesessidat taimanu hamyu mismu. In` fan riku sa` in` amot tres sientimos i prohimu? Mañgge konsensian miyu?

Fuetsan pottanmoneda

Yahu lumie` haye gi entre hamyu siña luma`la` gi sueddon mini-mum wage ni mañega ma-implementaña esta pa`gu. I empleau ni gai familia kuattru, nahoñg mohon gi \$5.50 gi ora `sino \$953.33 gi mes pat \$11,440 gi sakan. Na ti gaige este na sueddu gi papa` mafanana` an ni federal “poverty income level?”

Dispues de ha apase gima` familia--\$350-\$400 pesos gi mes, nuebu na kumahulu` health insurance, patteña gi “deductible” amot, real estate yan auto insurance, apas karetan familia; kuantu mohon na soblante guaha para otu obligasion familia? Estague` na didog chinatsaga mapadedese ni un` manadan familia gi señgsoñg siha. Guaha `nai mattu este na pinadese gi hinasson miyu?

Man-suesuette ha` megai tautau-ta pot un` patte gi kuttura: sen-sian dinaña yan ayudu. Sin este lamegai mas u fan mamadese kon-todu che`chu` kriminat.

Tai amigu i chinatsaga

I chinatsagan tautau tatnai ha eskohe haye gaige. Siña ha` mikeble-ña hau ke si binganu. Lau na sinaulag hau litiku pot chetnot korason, i pinadese parehu gi katkuet manera. Deste hagu yan familiamu tat ti inaminasa luhan, chathinassu, dumeskansa gi che`chu`, mamulan yan otu siha kinalamten familia.

Hulie` este gi un` biyinariu yan un` sumen poble. Achacha chu-michi` i dos sa` parehu puti i mapadedese. Poresu na mauleg tafan man-atan antau gi prohimuta pot no tafa` esklablu i prohimu.

Tinagu` Yuus`Tata` yinease` gi na`mase` yan muñga chattrata gi otu kontodu hagas esklabu. Estague` `nai hu hahala tatte talen banida pot no bai`na` puti i mas chatsaga ke guahu. Sensian kabales na kilisyanu!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Marijuana legalization in the CNMI

I want to make it clear that I support the legalization of marijuana and I am supported by two state legislatures, two governors, and the President of the United States himself. Need I say anymore to my critics? The declaration of War on Drugs has served to create more criminals than any single event in the world’s history, surpassing the moonshiners and whiskey runners of Prohibition. The criminaliza-tion and War on Drugs gave real value to drugs, creating cartels with leaders of nations and armies to do their bidding to supply the “man-made” drugs that are the real problem, not pot. In fact, I learned during my research in Mexico that the major pot dealers actually started the cartels in Mexico when they stopped running pot and switched to cocaine because of the drug war. Pot is bulky and cheap but the manmade drugs (ice, heroin, and cocaine) are small, which make them easier to smuggle and they are much more expensive—the simple economics of profit driven by supply and demand.

I know some idiot is going to say that God and the church are also against marijuana and but they need to know something. FYI, marijuana is an herb, not a drug, and all of the herb bearing trees and plants were given to us to be used by God/nature with only three stipu-lations: 1. Herbs are to be used only in “moderation” and not as a 24-hour vice for existence which we see in cocaine, ice, and heroin. 2. Herbs *are not* to be used for spiritual enlightenment for trying to be closer to God and godlike nor to reach some higher state of exis-tence. 3. Manipulating plants to create something stronger—specifi-cally to create junkies, knowing it is deadly if overdosed—is a sin. So, critics, don’t even try to play the holier-than-everyone-else who has smoked pot. In fact, I can say with a great degree of confidence that virtually every family in the CNMI has someone who smokes pot. I’m sure family members don’t hate their family members for smoking pot and the only reason most people reject pot today is

because it is illegal. The only people who should be prevented from smoking pot are those people in safety-sensitive jobs because they have the lives of other people in their hands.

It is estimated that drugs are a 30-billion-dollar-a-year industry and we created the industry when we creates laws against drugs instead of creating laws to educate people about drugs. It was bad supply-and-demand economics to try and kill the supply and a worse social decision. We should have been educating on the dan-gers of manmade drugs. Mankind can never control everything in this world with laws, especially the things that grow freely in the ground. I’m speaking out now because I finally have the official support of two states governments and the proof marijuana can truly help the CNMI economy based on the \$527 million that Denver got in one year of sales. I’m writing about this in hopes that we won’t end up dead last again because over a dozen more states are getting ready to legalize. If our competition in Guam or Hawaii beats us to the punch in legalizing pot, it will be futile for us. The early birds gets the worms and the late ones don’t eat. One people for being the first in the Pacific to legalize and thrive economically from the sale of marijuana!

P.S.: Alcohol is more dangerous than pot. Would you rather run into a person or ride in the care with a person who has been drinking or a person who has been smoking pot? Would you rather try to talk to someone who is upset that has been drinking or smoking pot? Your answer is proof: Alcohol is worse and just for added comfort, there are no marijuana-related illnesses known to mankind, unlike alcohol.

Ambrose M Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

Better go to Hawaii

So Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero is on his way eastward to the nation’s capital. He will pass and fly over the islands of Hawaii and the U.S. military Pacific Command. The objective of his trip to Washington D.C. includes military matters and bombing range use of Pagan Island.

If the Speaker really needs empirical lessons about how our mili-tary operate their bombing practices on an island, he should go to the island of Kahoolawe near the island of Maui in Hawaii. Prior to 1939 this island was used as a major bombing practice place by the military. In addition, what better place to talk about military matters than in the U.S. military Pacific Command on Oahu Island?

While visiting Kahoolawe Island, the Speaker could make a courtesy visit to the Kahoolawe Island Reserve Commission to talk about the Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary Act (Public Law 104-283). All this has prima facie purpose to the issues con-cerning the CNMI on military policies and bombing practices on an island. He can learn a lot about the aftermath of the military’s destruction of the island of Kahoolawe. This island today is only

good as a preserve sanctuary for the protected flora and fauna under the Marine Sanctuary Act. Clearing and cleaning the unexploded arsenals are still on going even to this day.

Taking a trip to Hawaii instead would make a better sense and our Speaker could witness first-hand how an island evidently turned out a waste after the military is done with it. If Delegate Gregorio C. Sablan is urging this idea, he should have recommended that the Speaker go to Hawaii where he would appreciate the issue more than a talk over coffee on a conference table—feeling and internal-izing the untold effects and scores of environmental degradations and aftermath that emptied an island of its purpose for human en-joyment in future years. We will trust the Speaker could see that he can get more bang for the dollar making a trip to Hawaii than to visit Washington D.C., plus it is too cold on winter days there and he may catch a bad virus or the flu.

Francisco R. Agulto
Kannat Tabla, Saipan

Meet with your constituents!

I moved back home to Saipan a year ago after being away for 11 years in New York. Oh, I’m I glad that I don’t have to experience another freezing winter that is currently sweeping the east side of the country. It feels great to be back to island-style living where ev-erything is within short drives like to the hospital, pristine beaches, blue/green waters, church services, relatives, friends, the Legisla-ture, and historical sites.

Saipan is dynamic that adds glitter to the island because many things change and the quest for better living is a constant activity and debate. People debate issues, make recommendations, scruti-nize mistakes, prosecute wrongdoings, and welcome visitors from countries who come to enjoy our pleasant weather, pristine beaches, The Grotto, swim in clean green/blue ocean and relax under a red-wood tree with the tropical breeze blowing from the north side of the island.

Saipan is a small community where people engage in daily con-versations about public policies on education, economy, legisla-tions, casino, military land use, and traditions like anniversaries, fiestas, cultural events, sports and other social events. In this atmo-sphere, there are also active conversations about the upcoming po-litical election and will become the centerpiece of media discussion.

What prompted me to write this letter is that many people in com-munities are concerned about our representative to the U.S. Con-gress and he has become a common topic of conversation, not only in the newspapers but also in social gatherings that I attend like par-ties, wakes, and barbecues at the beach. Quite a number of people whom I listen to at these gatherings have expressed concern that they feel betrayed by Delegate Greg Sablan because, as some put it, he is a “wolf dressed in sheep’s clothing.”

This caught my curiosity because of the concern of many people about one particular person who is an elected official. Being a non-political person I listen with interest to opinions and perceptions most of the time and offered only one. I ask in conversations that Delegate Sablan make the effort to call meetings in the villages and engage himself with the local people on what he is actually doing in Congress and answer questions because many are eager for an-swers that they say affect our lives, not only on Saipan but the entire CNMI.

So, Delegate Sablan, if you are reading this letter I ask that you make the effort to meet with your constituents, particularly the local people. You will be treading stormy waters if you choose to ignore them because they have the power of the pen come election time in November.






On another note, I plan to stay here for good and just breathe and live the tranquil life of an islander. No place like home.

Raena B. Sablan
Koblerville, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

| TODAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. |
| ▲ 86° ▼ 76° | ▲ 87° ▼ 76° | ▲ 87° ▼ 76° | ▲ 87° ▼ 76° | ▲ 87° ▼ 76° |

Micronesia

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|
| Guam and Rota | Thundershowers | ▲ 86 ▼ 78 |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | ▲ 84 ▼ 76 |
| Yap | Thunderstorms | ▲ 89 ▼ 77 |
| Chuuk | Showers | ▲ 87 ▼ 80 |
| Pohnpei | Partly Cloudy | ▲ 85 ▼ 80 |
| Kosrae | Partly Cloudy | ▲ 85 ▼ 80 |
| Majuro | Showers | ▲ 86 ▼ 80 |

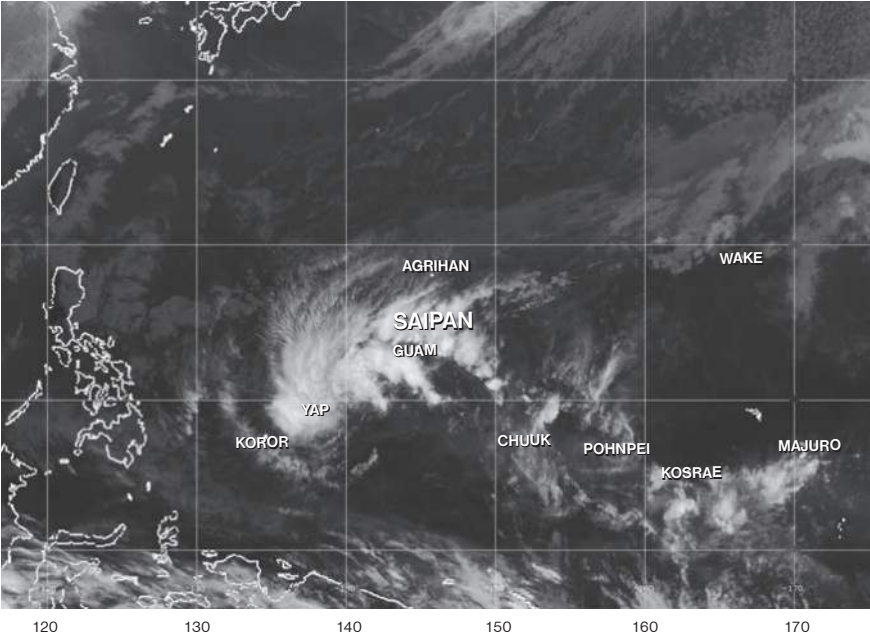
Around The Globe

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|
| Auckland | Mostly Sunny | ▲ 71 ▼ 62 |
| Beijing | Mostly Sunny | ▲ 45 ▼ 26 |
| Hong Kong | Sunny | ▲ 73 ▼ 64 |
| Honolulu | Partly Cloudy | ▲ 80 ▼ 67 |
| London | Showers | ▲ 45 ▼ 34 |
| Los Angeles | Partly Cloudy | ▲ 68 ▼ 52 |
| Manila | Cloudy | ▲ 83 ▼ 74 |
| Melbourne | Mostly Cloudy | ▲ 79 ▼ 58 |
| Miami | Showers | ▲ 74 ▼ 67 |
| New York | Sunny | ▲ 31 ▼ 25 |
| Osaka | Sunny | ▲ 52 ▼ 38 |
| Paris | Showers | ▲ 46 ▼ 42 |
| Pusan | Sunny | ▲ 52 ▼ 45 |
| Rome | Showers | ▲ 62 ▼ 50 |
| Salem | Showers | ▲ 45 ▼ 35 |
| San Francisco | Showers | ▲ 58 ▼ 46 |
| Seoul | Mostly Sunny | ▲ 42 ▼ 33 |
| Tokyo | Sunny | ▲ 58 ▼ 37 |
| Washington, DC | Sunny | ▲ 36 ▼ 24 |

Tides

| Saipan Harbor | | | |
|---------------|-------|------------|----------|
| 12:58 AM | Today | Low Tide: | 0.6 Feet |
| 7:52 AM | Today | High Tide: | 2.0 Feet |
| 1:21 PM | Today | Low Tide: | 1.0 Feet |
| 6:33 PM | Today | High Tide: | 2.1 Feet |

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2014
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A tropical disturbance is centered east of Yap at 10N142E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found across Yap and the Marianas within 180 miles of a line from 9N136E to 15N147E. A cold front extends west-southwestward from 25N175E to 19N160E then continues as a shear line to the Marianas to end at 15N148E. Clouds and patchy rain are seen along and up to 400 miles northwest of this boundary. Low-level convergence southeast of the cold front is generating scattered showers east of Wake Island within 100 miles of a line from 15N170E to 21N171E to 25N177E. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from just south of Kosrae to near Majuro within 150 miles of a line from 3N161E to 3N165E to 6N171E.

Sunrise/Sunset

| | | |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Today | 6:47 AM | 6:14 PM |
| Friday | 6:46 AM | 6:15 PM |
| Saturday | 6:46 AM | 6:15 PM |
| Sunday | 6:46 AM | 6:15 PM |
| Monday | 6:46 AM | 6:16 PM |

Moonrise/Moonset

| | | |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Today | 5:42 AM | 5:34 PM |
| Friday | 6:37 AM | 6:38 PM |
| Saturday | 7:30 AM | 7:40 PM |
| Sunday | 8:20 AM | 8:39 PM |
| Monday | 9:07 AM | 9:37 PM |

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

- PICTURES**
 - ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
 - BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
 - BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
 - SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
 - TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

- For pictures:**
- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

- the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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 - Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
 - Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 25, 2014

| DEPARTURES | ARRIVALS |
|--|---|
| SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) UA5070 4:15am 5:05am Daily UA5068 8:40am 9:30am Daily UA5039 1:35pm 3:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota UA5038 2:20pm 3:10pm 2, 3, 6 UA5078 6:05pm 6:55pm Daily UA5072 9:50pm 10:40pm Daily | GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN UA5069 2:45am 3:35am Daily UA5071 7:15am 8:05am Daily UA5039 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 UA5038 12:10pm 1:50pm 2, 3, 6 via Rota UA5077 4:45pm 5:35pm Daily UA5079 8:30pm 9:20pm Daily |
| SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP) UA5039 1:35pm 2:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7 | GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP) UA5038 12:10pm 12:45pm 2, 3, 6 |
| ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM) UA5039 2:40pm 3:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7 | ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN UA5038 1:15pm 1:50pm 2, 3, 6 |
| SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX) OZ119 4:00am 6:40am Daily | OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN OZ120 9:50pm 2:20am+1 Daily |
| SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) DL287 6:00am 8:40am Daily DL297 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily | NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily DL288 8:55pm 1:30am+1 Daily |
| SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) OZ608 3:10am 6:20am 1, 4, 5, 7 | BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN OZ607 9:00pm 1:50am+1 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ102 2:20am 5:50am 3 OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 OZ6063 3:30am 7:20am 4, 7 (will increase eff Jan 29) DZ104 2:00pm 5:30pm 6 OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily | SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN DZ101 8:30am 2:00pm 3 OZ603 9:00am 2:20pm Daily DZ103 7:30pm 1:00am+1 6 OZ605 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ605 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 OZ6053 9:10pm 2:30am+1 3, 6 (will increase eff Jan 29) |
| SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) 3U8648 6:10am 8:40am 1, 4, 5, 7 | SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8647 10:40pm 5:00am+1 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK) MU764 4:00am 8:00am 1, 5 | BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN MU763 7:20pm 3:00am+1 4, 7 |
| SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) 3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6 | GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN 3U8645 7:40pm 3:00am+1 1, 5 |
| SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 via ICN OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN UA5070/191 4:15am 9:05am 3, 6 via GUM DL287/473 6:00am 10:55pm Daily via NRT UA5068/PR111 8:40am 4:45pm 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM UA5039/183 1:35pm 9:30pm 5 via Guam UA5039/183 1:35pm 9:50pm 1, 4, 7 via Guam UA5038/183 2:20pm 9:30pm 2 via GUM OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN UA5078/183 6:05pm 9:50pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN | MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN OZ704/603 12:10am 2:20pm Daily PR110/UA5072 7:35am 5:35pm 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM DL172/288 7:45am 1:30am+1 Daily via NRT UA190/5077 9:55am 5:35pm 2, 7 via Guam UA190/5079 10:00am 5:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN UA184/5071 10:55pm 8:05am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM UA184/5071 11:59pm 8:05am+1 2, 5 via GUM |
| SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) OZ606/721 2:10am 11:50am 1 via ICN OZ606/721 2:40am 11:50am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN UA5068/179 8:40am 10:35pm 1, 5 via GUM UA5038/179 2:20pm 10:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ604/749 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN | HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN OZ746/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ724/605 1:50pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN UA180/5071 11:10pm 8:05am+1 1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM |
| SAIPAN-TIANJIN (TSN) D2884 10:45am 2:45pm Jan 25, 30, Feb 4, 9, 14, 24 | TIANJIN (TSN)-SAIPAN D2885 4:45pm 12:20am+1 Jan 25, 30, Feb 4, 9, 14, 24 |
| SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH) D2880 4:30pm 8:00pm Jan 28, Feb 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27 | HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN D2881 10:00pm 5:15am+1 Jan 28, Feb 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27 |
| SAIPAN-WUHAN (WUH) D2882 11:00am 3:15pm Jan 27, Feb 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26 | WUHAN (WUH)-SAIPAN D2883 5:15pm 12:20am+1 Jan 27, Feb 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air; SYL: Yakutia Air; D: Dynamic Airways.

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

| Airline | ETD | ETA | Frequency | Airline | ETD | ETA | Frequency |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-----------|----------------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Guam-Rota | | | | FRE 115 | 13:00 | 13:10 | Daily |
| FRE 100 | 7:30 | 8:00 | Daily | FRE 117 | 14:30 | 14:40 | Daily |
| Rota-Saipan | | | | FRE 119 | 16:00 | 16:10 | Daily |
| FRE 100 | 8:20 | 8:50 | Daily | FRE 121 | 16:40 | 16:50 | Daily |
| Guam-Rota | | | | FRE 123 | 17:40 | 17:50 | Daily |
| FRE 300 | 17:00 | 17:30 | Daily | FRE 125 | 18:30 | 18:40 | Daily |
| Rota-Saipan | | | | | | | |
| FRE 170 | 17:50 | 18:20 | Daily | | | | |
| Saipan-Rota | | | | Tinian-Saipan | | | |
| FRE 200 | 9:30 | 10:00 | Daily | FRE 102 | 7:05 | 7:15 | Daily |
| Rota-Guam | | | | FRE 104 | 7:50 | 8:00 | Daily |
| FRE 400 | 10:20 | 10:45 | Daily | FRE 106 | 8:20 | 8:30 | Daily |
| Saipan-Rota | | | | FRE 108 | 9:00 | 9:10 | Daily |
| FRE 400 | 18:55 | 19:25 | Daily | FRE 110 | 10:00 | 10:10 | Daily |
| Rota-Guam | | | | FRE 112 | 11:05 | 11:15 | Daily |
| FRE 400 | 19:40 | 20:10 | Daily | FRE 114 | 12:00 | 12:10 | Daily |
| Saipan-Tinian | | | | FRE 116 | 13:30 | 13:40 | Daily |
| FRE 101 | 6:45 | 6:55 | Daily | FRE 118 | 14:50 | 15:00 | Daily |
| FRE 103 | 7:30 | 7:40 | Daily | FRE 120 | 16:20 | 16:30 | Daily |
| FRE 105 | 8:00 | 8:10 | Daily | FRE 122 | 17:00 | 17:10 | Daily |
| FRE 107 | 8:40 | 8:50 | Daily | FRE 124 | 18:05 | 18:15 | Daily |
| FRE 109 | 9:10 | 9:20 | Daily | FRE 126 | 18:50 | 19:00 | Daily |
| FRE 111 | 10:45 | 10:55 | Daily | | | | |



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Business

State of the US economy: strongest since recession

By **JOSH BOAK**
AP ECONOMICS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. economy is showing more strength than at any time since the Great Recession began six years ago.

Employers are hiring. Home prices, sales and construction have surged. Corporate profits and stocks have hit records. And consumers have picked up their spending.

The economy has yet to fully recover from the most devastating crisis since the Great Depression. But it's getting closer—a point President Barack Obama was expected to highlight in his State of the Union address Tuesday night.

By the middle of this year, after years of steady but sluggish improvement, the United States is expected to have finally regained all the 8.7 million jobs lost during the recession, which officially ended 4 1/2 years ago. Many economic forecasters say the economy should grow 3 percent or more this year. That would be its best performance since 2005.

And yet in some ways, the lopsided nature of the half-decade global recovery leaves Obama with little to celebrate. Much of the U.S. labor force has gone without pay increas-



In this Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014, photo, a for sale sign is placed in front of a house in Mount Lebanon, Pa. Standard & Poor's releases S&P/Case-Shiller index of home prices for November, on Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014.

es. Millions have struggled for more than six months to find work. Others have had to accept lower-paying jobs and diminished career prospects.

Forty percent of Americans identify themselves as lower or lower-middle class, according to a survey released Monday by the Pew Research Center. Just 25 percent of the country felt that way in 2008.

If the economy does come

close to 3 percent growth for 2014, it would mark a solid improvement from the 2.4 percent average annual growth during the recovery so far. On Thursday, the government will estimate economic growth for all of 2013.

JOBS

Job growth has been remarkably steady in an uneven recovery. Employers have added at

least 2.1 million jobs in each of the past three years, creating momentum that could help the economy gain speed in 2014. Each new job puts more money in the hands of people to spend. That's why consistent job growth can give more traction to the recovery. The unemployment rate has plunged from 7.9 percent to 6.7 percent over the past year. That's down from a 10 percent peak in October 2009.

Still, the benefits of more hiring have been muted so far, in part because much of it has been concentrated in the low-wage industries of hotels, restaurants, retailers and temp workers. Also, millions of jobless Americans have stopped looking for work. Once people without jobs stop their searches, they're no longer counted as unemployed. As a result, the unemployment rate can fall in a way that overstates the health of the economy.

In December, for example, the unemployment rate fell from 7 percent to 6.7 percent, its lowest point in more than five years. But that was mainly because a wave of Americans stopped looking for work.

HOUSING

Real estate is rebounding. Home prices have climbed 13.7 percent over the past 12 months, according to a Standard & Poor's index released Tuesday. Sales of existing homes totaled 5.09 million last year, the best such performance since 2006, the National Association of Realtors said last week. Home industry experts say the gains should continue this year, though at a slower pace because higher mortgage rates and home prices will make buying less affordable for some.

CONSUMER SPENDING

The spending of consumers, which fuels about 70 percent of the economy, is starting to return to its pre-recession levels. The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index rose to 80.7 this month, well above last year's average of 73.3. Retail sales bumped up 4.2 percent in 2013, the fourth straight annual increase. Roughly 15.6 million autos were bought last year, an 8 percent improvement and the highest total since 2007. Historically low inflation and interest rates have kept food and clothing affordable. And according to the Gallup Organization, average daily consumer spending rose \$16 to \$88 last year.

STOCKS

The Dow Jones industrial average enjoyed a monster 2013, climbing 28 percent. Corporate profits are at their highest share of the economy in the 66 years of tracking by the government. Shares were bolstered by a Federal Reserve bond-buying program that is now being wound down. The eventual end of the program, paired with weak growth in China and troubles in Argentina and Turkey, help explain the 4.1 percent decline in the stock market since the start of this year.

Bank of Hawaii reports strong growth in 2013

HONOLULU, Hawaii—Bank of Hawaii Corp. reported Monday diluted earnings per share of \$0.88 for the fourth quarter of 2013, up from \$0.85 per share in the previous quarter, and down from \$0.90 per share in the same quarter last year.

Net income for the fourth quarter of 2013 was \$39.1 million, compared to net income of \$37.7 million in the third quarter of 2013 and \$40.3 million in the same quarter last year.

Loan and lease balances were \$6.1 billion at Dec. 31, 2013, up 1.5 percent from Sept. 30, 2013, and up 4.1 percent compared with Dec. 31, 2012.

Deposit growth remained strong during the quarter, increasing 2.6 percent from Sept. 30, 2013, and 3.3 percent from Dec. 31, 2012.

"Bank of Hawaii finished 2013 with another quarter of solid financial performance," said Peter Ho, chairman, president, and CEO. "During the quarter loan balances and deposits continued to grow. Our

net interest margin improved, credit quality remained stable, our capital ratios remain quite strong, and we maintained our focus on disciplined expense management."

The return on average assets for the fourth quarter of 2013 was 1.12 percent, compared with 1.09 percent in the third quarter of 2013 and 1.19 percent in the fourth quarter last year. The return on average equity for the fourth quarter of 2013 was 15.36 percent, compared with 15.02 percent in the third quarter of 2013 and 15.47 percent in the fourth quarter last year. The return on average assets for the full year of 2013 was 1.10 percent compared with 1.22 percent in 2012. The return on average equity for the full year of 2013 was 14.78 percent compared with 16.23 percent in 2012.

The company's overall asset quality remained stable during the fourth quarter of 2013. Total non-performing assets were \$39.7 million at Dec. 31, 2013,

up from \$33.8 million at Sept. 30, 2013, and \$37.1 million at Dec. 31, 2012. The increase in non-performing assets was largely due to the addition of one commercial loan in Guam.

The company's total assets increased to \$14.08 billion at Dec. 31, 2013, up \$235.4 million from total assets of \$13.85 billion at Sept. 30, 2013, and up \$355.9 million from total assets of \$13.73 billion at Dec. 31, 2012.

Total loans and leases increased to \$6.10 billion at Dec. 31, 2013, up from \$6.01 billion at Sept. 30, 2013, and up from \$5.85 billion at Dec. 31, 2012.

Total deposits increased to \$11.91 billion at Dec. 31, 2013, up from total deposits of \$11.61 billion at Sept. 30, 2013, and \$11.53 billion at Dec. 31, 2012. Average total deposits were \$11.57 billion in the fourth quarter of 2013, up from \$11.48 billion during the previous quarter and \$11.38 billion during the same quarter last year. **(BOH)**

United unveils new amenities for top customers at NY hub

NEWARK, N.J.—United Airlines opened Tuesday a new Global Services reception lobby for its top frequent flyers at the airline's New York hub at Newark Liberty International Airport. The new lobby offers personalized check-in and travel services to members of United's invitation-only Global Services program, and to customers traveling on long-haul international flights in United Global First.

Customers will access the new lobby via the Premier Access entry located at Door 4 of the Terminal C mid-level departures area. Adjacent to the C-2 security check-point, the reception area features four full-service check-in positions staffed by Global Services representatives wearing easily identifiable uniforms—gray suiting with gold ties or scarves. The reception area provides direct access to four newly constructed security lanes, which can be used either as TSA PreCheck lanes or standard lanes for customers who are not PreCheck-eligible, depending on demand. Custom-

ers using these lanes will have convenient access to the United Club in concourse C-3.

The décor of the new space closely mirrors the new United Club design concept that United introduced last year.

"United's new Global Services reception area at our New York hub will enable us to pro-

United Airlines

vide the high level of service our most loyal customers expect, while the expanded number of security lanes will expedite screening for all customers," said Jimmy Samartzis, United's vice president of customer experience. "This project is the latest step in our continued efforts to offer a more flyer-friendly premium travel experience for United customers."

Mercedes Flight-Connection Service

The airline also announced it will expand its tarmac transportation service, currently offered in Chi-

cago and Houston, to Newark Liberty beginning Tuesday. United will offer the chauffeur service, using Mercedes-Benz GL-Class vehicles, to some Global Services members and United Global First customers who are connecting at Newark to a domestic or international flight. Where feasible, representatives will meet Global Services and United Global First customers with applicable itineraries who may have tight connections and will drive them across the tarmac to their connecting flights.

United offers the service to surprise and delight its top customers who may have a tight connection or who have a substantial distance to travel between connecting flights.

United launched the tarmac transportation service at its Chicago and Houston hubs in July 2013 and plans to add the service at other U.S. hubs later this year.

Full details of the program and current offers are available at united.com/Mercedes.

For more information, visit united.com or follow United on Twitter and Facebook. **(United)**

STOCK PORTFOLIO



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
15,928.56
+90.68
+0.57%

S&P
1,792.50
+10.94
+0.61%

NASDAQ
4,097.96
+14.35
+0.35%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Australian Dollar | 1.1364 |
| British Pound | 0.6031 |
| Canadian Dollar | 1.1149 |
| Chinese Yuan | 6.0531 |
| Euro | 0.7320 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------------|-----------|
| Hong Kong Dollar | 7.7632 | Philippine Peso | 45.1303 |
| Indian Rupee | 62.1641 | Singapore Dollar | 1.2731 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 12040.2000 | South Korean Won | 1070.2201 |
| Japanese Yen | 103.3182 | Swiss Franc | 0.8998 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 3.3265 | Taiwan Dollar | 30.2853 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 1.2081 | Thailand Baht | 32.8995 |



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\$25.95



Northwest Territory Table 6ft

\$59.95



Kenmore 5 cu.ft. Chest Freezer

\$339.95



Beginning By Sauder 5 Shelf Book Case

\$37.95



Northwest Territory Big Boy XL Recliner Chair

\$49.95



Beginning By Sauder Coffee Table

\$29.95



Sleepmaster Folding Guest Bed

\$129.95



Beginnings By Sauder TV Stand Cherry Color

\$99.95

Alphaline TV Stand with Wall Mount 32 to 55

\$109.95



Cosco 5 Piece Table and Chair Set

\$89.95

Essential Home 7 pc Storage Ottoman Set

\$114.95



Element 19" LED TV

\$199.95



Curtis DVD Player

\$39.95



Uniden 1100 White Corded Slimline Phone

\$9.95



Kenmore 12" Table Fan

\$29.95



Kenmore Comfort Personal High Velocity Fan

\$23.95

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Pacific 20" Boy's Evolution Bicycle **\$139.95**

Pacific Evolution 26" Bicycle **\$139.95**

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Sportpower 12 Foot Trampoline with Enclosure

\$279.95



Bissel Zing Canister Vacuum

\$79.95

Craftsman 2.5 Gal Wet/Dry Vac

\$39.95



Essential Home 20pk Wash Cloth

\$5.95

Shark Portable Steamer

\$88.95

Infini Flo 50ft Hose

\$31.95



Cosco Step Stool 3 Step Big Step

\$39.95



Poulan Gas Chain Saw

\$169.95

Essential Home 15pc Shower Rug Set

\$19.95



Champion Breed 40# Dog Food

\$29.95

Marcy 40lb Dumbbell Set

\$32.95



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Nation

Obama vows to flex presidential powers in speech

By JULIE PACE

AP WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON (AP)—Seeking to energize his sluggish second term, President Barack Obama vowed Tuesday night in his State of the Union address to sidestep Congress “whenever and wherever” necessary to narrow economic disparities between America’s rich and poor.

He unveiled an array of modest executive actions to increase the minimum wage for federal contract workers and make it easier for millions of low-income people to save for retirement.

“America does not stand still and neither do I,” Obama declared in his prime-time address before a joint session of Congress and millions of Americans watching on television.

Draped in presidential grandeur, Obama’s hour-long address served as the opening salvo in a midterm election fight for control of Congress that will quickly consume Washington’s attention. Democrats, seeking to cast Republicans as uncaring about the middle class, have urged Obama to focus on economic mobility and the gap between the wealthy and poor. His emphasis on executive actions was greeted with shouts of “Do it!” from many members of his party.

Declaring 2104 a “year of action,” Obama also sought to convince an increasingly skeptical public that he still wields power in Washington even if he can’t crack through the divisions in Congress. Burned by a series of legislative failures in 2013, White House aides say they’re now redefining success not by what Obama can jam through Congress but by what actions he can take on his own.

Indeed, Obama’s proposals for action by lawmakers were slim and largely focused on old ideas that have gained little traction over the past year. He pressed Congress to revive a stalled immigration overhaul, pass an across-the-board increase in the federal minimum wage and expand access to early childhood education—all ideas that gained little traction after he proposed them last year. The president’s one new legislation proposal calls for expanding an income tax credit for workers without children.

Republicans, who saw their own approval ratings fall further in 2013, have also picked up the refrain of income inequality in recent months, though they have cast the widening gap between rich and poor as a symptom of Obama’s economic policies.

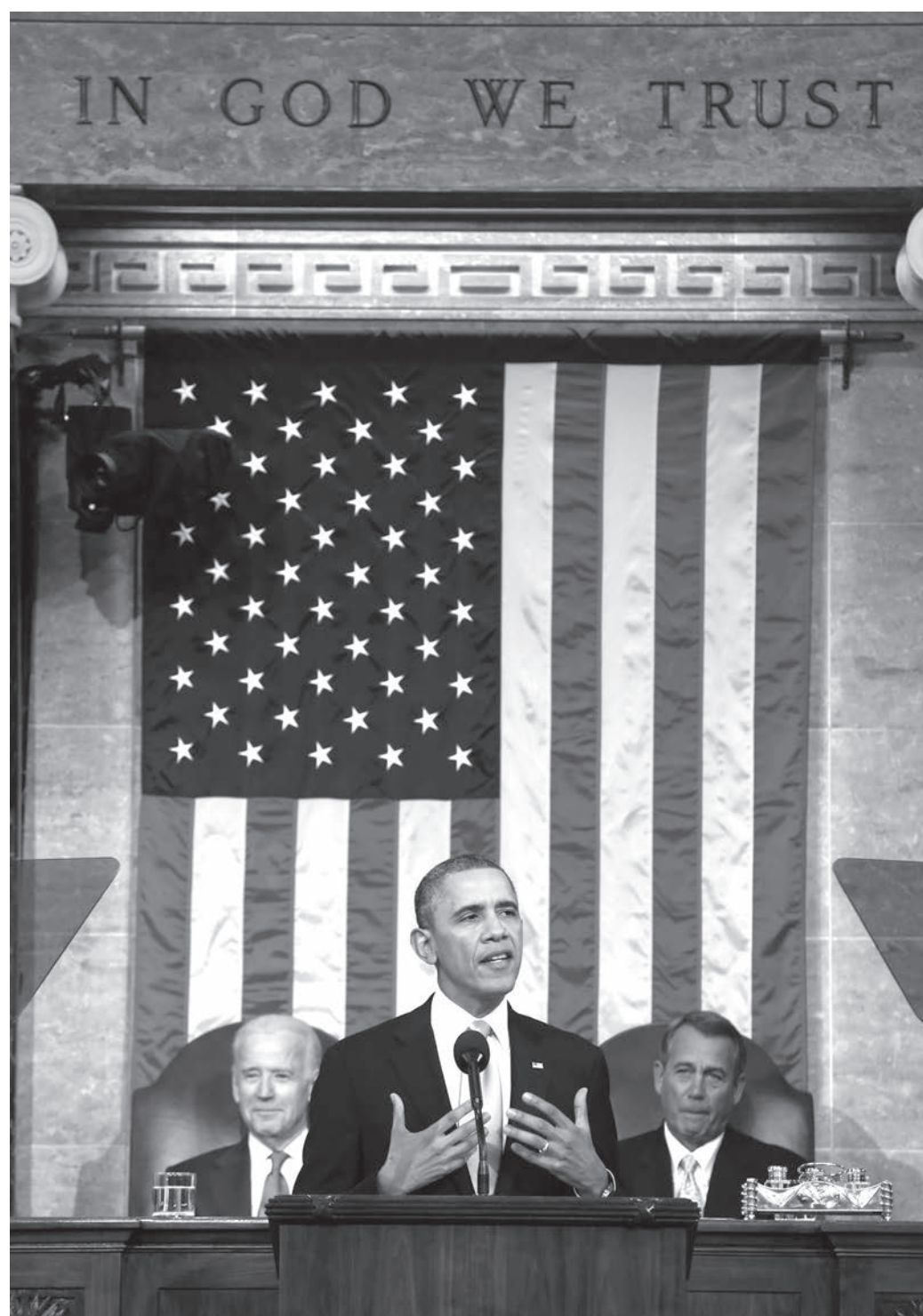
“Republicans have plans to close the gap, plans that focus on jobs first without more spending, government bailouts and red tape,” said Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., in the Republicans’ televised response to the president’s speech. “We hope the president will join us in a year of real action, by empowering people, not making their lives harder with unprecedented spending, higher taxes, and fewer jobs.”

The economy and other domestic issues, including health care, dominated the president’s address. He touched only briefly on foreign policy, reiterating his threat to veto any new sanctions Congress might levy on Iran while nuclear negotiations with the Islamic republic are underway and touting the drawdown of American troops from Afghanistan this year.

In an emotional high point, Obama singled out Cory Remsburg, an Army Ranger who was a guest of first lady Michelle Obama. Remsburg, who was nearly killed in Afghanistan during one of his 10 deployments, rose slowly from his seat and was greeted by long and thunderous applause from the president and lawmakers.

Even as Washington increasingly focuses on income inequality, many parts of the economy are gaining strength, with corporate profits soaring and the financial markets hitting record highs. But with millions of Americans still out of work or struggling with stagnant wages, Obama has found himself in the sometimes awkward position of promoting a recovery that feels distant for many.

“The cold, hard fact is that even in the midst of recovery, too many Americans are working more than ever just to get by, let alone get



President Barack Obama delivers the State of Union address before a joint session of Congress in the House chamber Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014, in Washington, as Vice President Joe Biden, and House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio, listen.

ahead,” Obama said. “And too many still aren’t working at all.”

The president garnered some of his loudest applause—at least from Democrats—when he took on lawmakers who oppose his signature health care law, which floundered in its initial rollout last fall. Obama said that while he doesn’t expect to convince Republicans on the merits of the law, “I know that the American people aren’t interested in refighting old battles.”

The president’s speech drew an eclectic mix of visitors to the House chamber. Among those sitting with Mrs. Obama were two survivors of the Boston Marathon bombing, as well as Jason Collins, an openly gay former NBA player. Republican House Speaker John Boehner brought business owners from his home state of Ohio who say Obama’s health care overhaul is hurting their companies. Willie

Robertson, a star of the television show “Duck Dynasty,” also scored a seat in the House gallery, courtesy of the Republicans.

Though Obama sought to emphasize his presidential powers, there are stark limits to what he can do on his own. For example, he unilaterally can raise the minimum hourly wage for new federal contractors from

\$7.25 to \$10.10, as he announced, but he’ll need Congress in order to extend that increase to all of America’s workers.

The executive order for contractors,

which Obama will sign in the coming weeks, is limited in its scope. It will not affect existing federal contracts, only new ones, and then only if other terms of an agreement change.

Republicans quickly panned the executive initiative as ineffective. Said Boehner: “The question is how many people, Mr. President, will this executive action actually help? I suspect the answer

is somewhere close to zero.”

White House officials countered by saying many more working people would benefit if Congress would go along with Obama’s plan to raise the minimum wage across the board.

“Give America a raise,” Obama declared.

Among the president’s other executive initiatives is a plan to help workers whose employers don’t offer retirement savings plans. The program would allow first-time savers to start building up savings in Treasury bonds that eventually could be converted into traditional IRAs. Obama is expected to promote the “starter” accounts during a trip to Pittsburgh on Wednesday.

The president also announced new commitments from companies to consider hiring the long-term unemployed, the creation of four “manufacturing hubs” where universities and businesses would work together to develop and train workers, new incentives to encourage truckers to switch from dirtier fuels to natural gas or other alternatives and a proposed tax credit to promote the adoption of cars that can run on cleaner fuels, such as hydrogen, natural gas or biofuels.

The president’s go-it-alone strategy is in many ways an acknowledgment that he has failed to make good on two major promises to the American people: that he would change Washington’s hyper-partisanship and that his re-election would break the Republican “fever” and clear the way for congressional action on major initiatives.

Some Republicans have warned that the president’s focus on executive orders could backfire by angering GOP leaders who already don’t trust the White House.

“This isn’t the American way, courts have not supported his past attempts, and he only does damage to the American people’s confidence in government when he doesn’t work with Congress to pass real reforms,” said Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., the chairman of the House Oversight Committee.

Obama isn’t abandoning Congress completely. He made a renewed pitch for legislation to overhaul the nation’s fractured immigration laws, perhaps his best opportunity for signing significant legislation this year. But the odds remain long, with many Republicans staunchly opposed to Obama’s plan for creating a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million people already in the U.S. illegally.

Seeking to give the GOP some room to maneuver, Obama did not specifically call for a citizenship pathway Tuesday, saying only, “Let’s get it done. It’s time.”

Opening a new front with Congress, the president called for an extension of the earned-income tax credit, which helps boost the wages of low-income families through tax refunds. Obama wants it broadened so that it provides more help than it does now to workers without children, a view embraced by some Republicans and conservative economists.

Obama singled out Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, who has proposed replacing the tax credit with a federal wage supplement for workers in certain low-paying jobs. Unlike Obama, however, Republicans have suggested expanding the tax credit as an alternative to increasing the minimum wage.

Pivoting briefly to foreign policy, Obama reaffirmed that the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan will formally conclude at the end of this year. But he said a small contingent of American forces could be left behind if the Afghan government quickly signs a bilateral security agreement, a prospect that looks increasingly uncertain.

The president also warned lawmakers in both parties against passing new economic sanctions against Iran while the U.S. and international partners are holding nuclear negotiations with the Islamic republic. He renewed his commitment to veto sanctions legislation if it passes, arguing that a new round of penalties would upend the sensitive diplomacy.

“America does not stand still and neither do I.”

Asia

Thai govt: No delay in election

BANGKOK (AP)—Thailand's government announced Tuesday it will go ahead with an election this weekend despite an opposition boycott, months of street protests and the likelihood of more violence in the country's political crisis.

The government made the announcement after Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra met with the Election Commission, which had sought a delay in the polls.

The decision to hold Sunday's parliamentary balloting will further inflame tensions and chances of violence. A protest leader was killed and about a dozen others were injured in a clash last Sunday as protesters swarmed dozens of polling stations to stop advance voting. Since Nov. 30, 10 people have died and at least 577 have been injured.



Shinawatra

Anti-government protesters occupying parts of Bangkok are demanding that Yingluck step down before any election, and that she be replaced by a non-elected interim government that would institute reforms to remove her family's influence from politics. The opposition Democrat Party, which backs the protests, is boycotting the election.

The crisis pits followers and opponents of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra against each other. Thaksin, a billionaire who is Yingluck's older brother, was deposed by a military coup in 2006 after being accused of corruption and abuse of power, and since then the two sides have been engaged in a sometimes violent struggle for power.

Yingluck's supporters, in-

cluding many people in the countryside who benefited from Thaksin's populist policies, are demanding that they be allowed to vote.

"The longer this crisis goes on, the more dangerous it becomes," said Chris Baker, a Bangkok-based political analyst and writer. "The economy is clearly suffering already. It will suffer more the longer it goes on. The chances of violence keep increasing because emotions are getting stoked up."

Several hundred protesters laid siege to Tuesday's meeting between Yingluck and the Election Commission.

Election Commissioner Somchai Srisutthiyakorn said more violence was likely during the polls and would further damage the country.

"I think Thailand has suffered enough and no one should be hurt or die from this election," Somchai told reporters.

PH cops accused of using 'wheel of torture'

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine police officers played a "wheel of torture" game to have fun and punish criminal suspects during interrogations, including bouts of punching named after boxing star Manny Pacquiao, human rights officials and activists said Tuesday.

Under the game, detainees—mostly suspected drug traffickers—were punched if the "torture wheel" stopped at "20 seconds Manny Pacman," Pacquiao's nickname, or hung upside down if it stopped at a punishment called "30-second bat," Amnesty International said. The London-based rights group called the practice despicable.

A picture of the multi-colored wheel provided by the Commission on Human Rights showed several other tortures, including "3 minutes zombies" and

"30-second duck walk/ferris wheel" but it was not immediately clear how those punishments were carried out.

"It's horrible," commission Chairwoman Loretta Ann Rosales said. "They do it for fun, it's like a game for entertainment. We're trying to correct this mindset based on a human rights approach to policing but obviously it may take a lot of time."

Allegations of torture have particular resonance in the Philippines, which emerged from a brutal era of dictatorship nearly three decades ago. Thousands of victims during dictator Ferdinand Marcos's rule won a class action suit against his estate for torture and other rights violations in 1992 in Hawaii. A peaceful, army-backed "people power" revolt ousted Marcos in 1986.

President Benigno Aquino

III, son of revered pro-democracy leaders who fought Marcos, has pledged to prosecute violators of human rights. Rights groups, however, say violations have continued with impunity.

The violations allegedly took place at a police intelligence office in Binan town in Laguna province south of Manila which has not been accredited as a detention center and was holding crime suspects illegally, Rosales said.

She said her commission investigated after receiving a tip early this month on alleged abuses of more than 40 detainees. The maltreatment allegedly occurred last year and this month.

Rosales said she has urged top police officials to pursue criminal complaints against about 10 officers who were implicated in the abuses.

HK lesbian appeals to tycoon dad over dowry

HONG KONG (AP)—The daughter of a flamboyant Hong Kong tycoon whose offer of a massive dowry inspired a movie wrote an open letter on Wednesday asking him to accept who she is after he reportedly raised the price.

Cecil Chao made world headlines in 2012 when he tried to find a man who could successfully woo his daughter, Gigi Chao, away from her partner by offering 500 million Hong Kong dollars (\$65 million), an offer that a Malaysian newspaper who interviewed him last week said he has doubled.

In a letter to her father published Wednesday by two Hong Kong newspapers, Gigi Chao said she knows it's "difficult for you to understand, let alone ac-

cept" how she could be romantically attracted to a woman.

The tycoon made his offer after he learned his daughter had eloped with her partner, Sean Eav, to France, where they had a church blessing in Paris. While Hong Kong decriminalized homosexuality in 1991, it does not legally recognize same-sex marriage.

Gigi Chao, 34, added that "it would mean the world to me if you could just not be so terrified of her, and treat her like a normal, dignified human being." She confirmed to the AP that she wrote the letter.

She added, "I will always forgive you for thinking the way you do, because I know you think you are acting in my best interests."

Sacha Baron Cohen, the actor behind "Borat," is reportedly working on a movie inspired by the tycoon's proposal, according to Hollywood trade publications.

Cecil Chao, who made his fortune as a Hong Kong property developer, has a reputation for being a playboy with a love for Rolls-Royces. He once claimed to have had 10,000 girlfriends but has never married. Gigi Chao is one of his three children by three different women.

The *South China Morning Post*, one of the papers that published the letter, reported last week that since her father went public with his offer, she has received "strange" phone calls from would-be suitors, and that most open by saying, "I want to be a billionaire!"

World

Ukraine PM resigns, as govt offers concessions

KIEV, Ukraine (AP)—In back-to-back moves aimed at defusing Ukraine's political crisis, the prime minister resigned Tuesday and parliament repealed anti-protest laws that had set off violent clashes between protesters and police.

The two developments were significant concessions to the anti-government protesters who have fought sporadically with police for the last 10 days after two months of peaceful around-the-clock demonstrations.

The protests erupted after President Viktor Yanukovich turned toward Russia for a bailout loan instead of signing a deal with the European Union and have since morphed

into a general plea for more human rights, less corruption and more democracy in this nation of 45 million.

The departure of Prime Minister Mykola Azarov removes one of the officials most disliked by the opposition forces whose protests have turned parts of Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, into a barricaded maze.

However, Azarov's spokesman told the Interfax news agency that another staunch Yanukovich ally, deputy Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov, will assume temporary leadership of the Cabinet, a move that is unlikely to please the opposition.

Other key issues remain unresolved in Ukraine's political

crisis, including the opposition's repeated demand that Yanukovich resign and a new election be held.

Azarov's resignation came just before the opening of a special parliament session that repealed anti-protest laws that had set off violent clashes between protesters and police.

Earlier this month, Yanukovich pushed through the new laws to crack down on protests and increase prison sentences for creating disorder. The laws also prohibited demonstrators from wearing helmets and gas masks as many have done for fear that riot police would try to violently disperse protests.



Protesters guard the barricade in front of riot police in Kiev, Ukraine, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014.

WORLD BRIEFS

Man of the Year not enough? Francis now SuperPope

VATICAN CITY (AP)—It wasn't enough that Pope Francis was named Time magazine's "Person of the Year" or that he fronted this week's Rolling Stone magazine. Now there's SuperPope graffiti sprouting up around the Vatican. The white caped crusader appeared Tuesday on a wall just off Borgo Pio, a tiny cobble-stoned street near St. Peter's Square. In typical superhero fashion, Francis' right fist is thrust in the air, leading him in flight, while his left clutches his black satchel. "Valores," or values in Spanish, is written across it. The artist is identified only as Maupal. The Vatican communications office approved of the image, tweeting a photo Tuesday.

More-controlled Morsi appears in Egyptian court

CAIRO (AP)—The second court appearance for ousted President Mohammed Morsi was very different from his first: He wore a white prison uniform Tuesday instead of a trim dark suit. And when the Islamist leader wanted to speak, a judge controlled his microphone in the soundproof glass cell. The session was carefully managed by authorities, with state TV showing only edited excerpts, not a planned live feed.

An agitated Morsi paced in the courtroom cage, separated from other defendants, and raised his hands as he angrily questioned why he was in court. "Who are you? Tell me!" he shouted at the presiding judge. Judge Shabaan el-Shami responded: "I am the head of Egypt's criminal court!" After five hours, the court session was adjourned until Feb. 22.

Brahimi: Syria peace talks slow but 'still at it'

GENEVA (AP)—Syrian government anger over a U.S. decision to resume aid to the opposition prompted the U.N. mediator to cut short Tuesday's peace talks, but he said no one was to blame for the impasse and that the negotiations would continue. A deal to allow humanitarian aid into Homs remained stalled, with the Syrian delegation demanding assurances the U.S. aid will not go to "armed and terrorist groups" in the besieged city. U.N.-Arab League mediator Lakhdar Brahimi said he was relieved that the government and opposition said they will remain in the daily talks through Friday, as planned. "Nobody's walking out. Nobody's running away," he told reporters. "We have not actually made a breakthrough, but we are still at it, and this is enough as far as I'm concerned."

Focus

By ANDREW DALTON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Barack Obama used his State of the Union address Tuesday night to make his pitch that the nation must come together to address persistent problems, from the wealth gap between rich and poor to economic mobility to lagging schools.

Stymied by Congress, Obama vowed that if lawmakers won't act, he will use his executive power to achieve some of his goals, which include raising the minimum wage for some workers hired by federal contractors and making it easier for low-income Americans to save for retirement.

The president also called on lawmakers to pass immigration reform and restore unemployment benefits, among other proposals.

The Associated Press spoke with a sampling of viewers from around the country to gauge whether the president succeeded in convincing them of the need for his proposals—or whether his address would be seen as the opening salvo in the midterm election fight for control of Congress.

HE WAS TALKING ABOUT ME, BUT CAN HE HELP ME

Scott Valenti was astonished as he listened to the president. "He was talking about me tonight," said the 41-year-old resident of Woodland Park, Colo. "But I can tell you, I'm no more reassured than when he started."

After years of work, Valenti put himself through Colorado Christian University to finally get his bachelor's degree in organizational management.

But after a post-graduation position fell through, he's been jobless for a month with two teenage children to provide for

and a mortgage to pay. Still, Obama's pledges to help the unemployed and his urging of Congress to jumpstart job growth left Valenti cold.

"When we look back 40 years from now and say, 'that Obama initiative in 2014 led to some change,' well, I'm sure that will happen," he said. "But I need a job now."

SEEKING A BIGGER SLICE OF THE PIE—WHOEVER DOES THE CUTTING

Naquasia LeGrand, 22, who works part-time as a fast-food employee at Kentucky Fried Chicken, said she was especially happy to hear Obama point to a pizza store owner who had raised his employees' wages, and asked other Americans to follow that example.

"Businesses don't have to wait on Congress to help their employees have a living wage," said LeGrand, from Brooklyn, who has campaigned to raise the minimum wage to \$15 and to allow fast-food workers to unionize.

LeGrand said she was glad to see Obama suggest going around lawmakers and using his executive power.

"I'm glad to see he's taking steps and taking action with or without Congress and he's going to do what he's there to do."

ELECTRIC TECHNICIAN LIKES POWERED-UP PRESIDENT

Dean Weygandt, 52, of Toledo, Ohio, an electronics technician

Americans react to Obama's address to nation

who's active in his local union, said that when it came to Obama using executive orders for his agenda, it's about time.

"I think he's used executive privilege less than he should have," Weygandt said.

"He's tried to work with those people," he said, referring to Republicans in Congress. "There are times before he could have used it and didn't."

He said he liked Obama's ideas on retirement and reforming the tax code, saying they would bring a better future.

"Personally, I'm not living hand-to-mouth, paycheck-to-paycheck, but I'm living month-to-month and I know the importance of a good retirement."

NOT SO FAST WITH YOUR PEN, MR. PRESIDENT

Bill Deile, 70, a retired Army colonel and attorney living in Cape Coral, Fla., said he took notice of what he called a "veiled threat" from the president when Obama promised to take action alone if Congress wouldn't.

"That I think, if it doesn't spur Congress into some sort of action to clamp down on this guy, I think you're going to see it from the states," he said.

Deile said he appreciated that Obama touched on immigration reform, even though he doubts they would agree on how it should be handled.

"I'm sure his idea of immigration reform is 180 degrees from what my idea is," Deile said. "His is probably to legalize everyone, and my idea is to



AP
President Barack Obama delivers the State of the Union address before a joint session of Congress in the House chamber Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014, in Washington.

close the borders and get those people out of here."

LOFTY WORDS BRING LITTLE FAITH

Mary Lynn English, 44, who has pursued more than 100 marketing jobs in recent years without success, said she wasn't impressed by the president's positivity.

"I was glad to hear what he's saying, but it's words and I'll be happier when there's some action. It doesn't much matter what the president says tonight," said English, who lives in the North Carolina mountain city of Asheville.

"All of that is happening in a stratosphere that's going to take a good long while to get to western North Carolina," English said.

English appreciated the president saying that policymakers needed to make sure they reward work at a time employees often feel they are underappreciated and too of-

ten treated as disposable.

'DISGUST' IN THE RUST BELT

Alan McIntyre, 43, self-employed, of the Mount Airy neighborhood of suburban Cincinnati said the speech was, "in a word: disgusting."

McIntyre didn't find any policies he could support. Of MyRA, the president's proposal to help lower-income Americans save for retirement, McIntyre was negative toward the idea of a guarantee that people wouldn't lose what they put in.

He said liberal Democrats "want to talk about how bad off people are and how they can guarantee things for people. I only need you to guarantee one thing for me: that you'll stay out of my way."

"You have to assume that risk, that's called responsibility," he said, referring to investments.

MONEY FOR NUTS, AND PICKERS MORE FREE

Phil Erro, 69, said Obama either forgot or flew past farmers like him and the workers they need. "He's completely skirted the immigration issue and I think he could have plugged the farm bill," said Erro, an almond farmer in California's Central Valley.

"I was disappointed," he said, adding that he would have liked to see "some notion" about how Congress could reach agreement on immigration reform and that he wanted Obama to push for a path to legal residency that's short, such as three to five years.

The small grower relies heavily on workers from Mexico and Central America to prune, harvest and do other jobs.

MORE STUDENT LOAN RELIEF, LESS SPYING

Jonas Miller, 38, works part-time as

an independent contractor specializing in disaster relief work—but has been unable to find a full-time job despite looking since 2012.

He said he was most-excited to hear Obama mention reducing student debt loads because he owes nearly \$80,000 on his final two years of college and two years of graduate school.

"I find myself with an incredible burden of student loans," Miller said, "and it's really quite limiting in my options from this point forward."

Miller said he was excited to hear that Obama won't wait for Congress to move forward on major policies, but that he wished the president had spoken more about domestic spying.

"I think he's glossing over something that really is one of the most important items to come up during his presidency," he said.

BORDERING ON BORED WITH IMMIGRATION IDEAS

Raul Sanchez, 38, a graduate student at the University of Texas, said he wished the president would have talked more about immigration reform because what he said during the State of the Union address was "a lot of what I'd heard before."

"I don't think that he's put pressure on members of Congress the way that he could have, the way he did with the Affordable Care Act," Sanchez said.

He said he thinks that Obama waited until his second term to push immigration reform because it would have been a divisive issue like it has been before.

"Though he's making strong efforts right now, I still feel he didn't address it very much," he said. "He said nothing about a path to citizenship which was a bit troubling."

Obama's agenda more bite-sized than bold

WASHINGTON (AP)—Count 2014 as the year President Barack Obama's agenda went from bold to bite-sized.

The president's State of the Union address Tuesday was an amalgam of modest proposals designed to chip away at some of the same problems he's been working on all along: persistent unemployment, middle-class insecurity, lagging schools and more.

"Let's make this a year of action," Obama exhorted members of Congress arrayed before him. "That's what most Americans want—for all of us in this chamber to focus on their lives, their hopes, their aspirations."

But coming off a year in which his major legislative proposals largely fell flat, Obama already was putting Plan B in play, too.

Where Congress won't cooperate, Obama aims to find creative ways to act more frequently on his own, through executive orders, regulatory action, presidential cajoling and the like.

"Wherever and whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunity for more American families, that's what I'm going to do," he declared.

There is plenty Obama can do on his own. But creativity is no substitute for clout.

And an executive order on job training, wages or retirement security doesn't have the zing of an \$800 billion stimulus plan or a historic overhaul of the health care system.

Obama isn't closing off further congressional action: He renewed his calls for legislation on immigration reform, extending unemployment benefits, boosting the minimum wage for all workers and bolstering preschool programs. And he added new items to

his congressional wish list, including a call to expand the earned income tax credit to workers without children.

But Obama knows congressional Republicans are even less likely to cooperate this year than they were in 2013, which has largely been written off as a lost year. And that knowledge is giving him a new sense of urgency.

The White House announced Obama's first new unilateral action—raising the minimum wage for newly hired federal contract workers—even before he began speaking.

It quickly drew derision from Republicans. House Speaker John Boehner stressed that the change would affect only new contracts and predicted the number of workers affected would be "somewhere close to zero."

Still, small steps may be a better fit for these times than grand legislative proposals that would likely stall.

The economy is better, even if not everyone's feeling it yet. The unemployment rate is lower, even if 6.7 percent still isn't great. The health care law is taking effect, even if it's causing heartburn for plenty of Americans.

The president had a fine line to walk in his speech: projecting the optimism and energy that dispirited members of his party, and the public at large, are hungry for without overpromising at a time when his influence is sure to wane.

"This can be a breakthrough year for America," he declared.

Obama tempered that optimistic assessment with an open question to lawmakers: "The question for everyone in this chamber, running through every decision we make this year, is whether we are going to help or hinder this progress."

With Congress unlikely to deal on most issues, Obama must

By NANCY BENAC
Associated Press

Nancy Benac has covered government and politics for The Associated Press for more than three decades.



keep expectations low, without putting people into a funk.

If they're not already there, that is.

Polls show people are pessimistic about the country's direction and the condition of the economy. Seventy percent think unemployment will stay the same or get worse in the next year.

As for Obama himself, "both his supporters and his opponents are worried that he has lost his enthusiasm and his energy for the political contest," said Calvin Jillson, a presidential scholar at Southern Methodist University.

Jillson pointed to Obama's own comments in a recent interview that he's "overexposed" and that it's natural for people to want something new "after six, seven years of me being on the national stage."

But Obama insists that with three more years in the Oval Office, he's still passionate about the issues that matter.

In his speech, he sketched a vision of an America where "honest work is plentiful and communities are strong; where prosperity is widely shared and opportunity for all lets us go as far as our dreams and toil will take us."

The speech was an opportunity to try to restore the public's confidence in that vision of America—in a pragmatic, bite-sized kind of way.

Environment

Recycling nature: He makes rustic furniture from garden 'debris'

By VIRGINIA A. SMITH
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

PHILADELPHIA—David Hughes, a Doylestown, Pa., landscape architect with an affinity for native flora and natural landscapes, often finds himself ripping out dead, overgrown, or otherwise undesirable plants to make way for new.

But he doesn't haul that nasty Japanese honeysuckle, Chinese white mulberry, or Norway maple to the dump, curb, or chipper. Hughes is that rare soul who prizes what other designers and gardeners despise, more so if it's scarred by deer browsing, insect damage, or disease.

That's because, in addition to designing ecologically responsible landscapes in the Philadelphia region, Hughes, 46, is a skilled woodworker who makes rustic furniture from garden "debris," a kind of plant-world Dumpster diver.

"To me, it's a nice marriage, landscaping and woodworking," says Hughes, whose five-year-old business, his second, is called Weatherwood Design. It comprises about 70 percent landscaping and 30 percent woodworking.

Storm-felled trees and gnarly vines make good raw materials. So do pruned branches, old barn boards, and stuff plucked, with permission, from the side of the road.

An arborist friend scouts out intriguing branches and discarded trunks. Hughes helps the Natural Lands Trust and local preserves thin out invasives or dead trees. And every July Fourth, again with permission, he rescues unwanted driftwood from death by bonfire at a public beach on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

The wood might sit for years on the one-acre property Hughes shares with his widowed dad, Merritt Hughes, a retired English teacher. Logs,



A Hughes bench, of red cedar and black locust, commissioned for the Mt. Cuba Center.

planks, oddball sticks and scraps are stacked along the driveway, in the yard, and in and around Hughes' densely packed, unheated 8-by-12-foot workshop.

"It's hard to throw anything out," he says a bit sheepishly of the jars of nails, screws, and bolts, the bits of this or that, and the saws, planes, and other tools of his trade.

Drying wood outside is challenging. But if rain and snow are his nemeses, water is also a friend. "My best ideas come in the shower," he says.

Those ideas—for chairs, tables and benches, garden gates, and screens, trellises, arbors, railings, and birdhouses—are time-consuming. A simple-looking chair can take 35 hours to make, at \$45 an hour, not counting time to find and dry the wood and do research.

"It's like putting together a

big jigsaw puzzle. There are no square edges to anything," says Hughes, who is itching for some land of his own so he can grow hedgerows of the native trees—alder, sassafras, Eastern red cedar, black locust, Osage orange—he likes to work with.

He also wants to live off the

grid and build native plant, meadow, and woodland demonstration gardens. Four acres, at a minimum, would do it, though so much real estate would involve a lot of deer-fencing.

But fenced it must be; deer are plentiful, and Hughes has



David Hughes, landscape architect, works on a piece of wood for a project at his Buckingham, Pa. woodshop, Jan. 10, 2014.

had Lyme disease 14 times since the early 1990s.

That he has worked through such a scourge reflects a lifetime of loving plants.

Growing up in Glenside, Pa., Hughes was "always out playing and getting muddy and dirty," often in Baederwood Park. Foreshadowing the landscape architect he would become, he spent hours in the attic constructing vehicles and buildings with Legos and Lincoln Logs.

As an 8-year-old, guided by his handy grandfather, Sylvester "Cookie" Cook, Hughes built metal cladding to reinforce a toy castle, and carved sticks to support a leather-covered tepee.

"I loved the outdoors," he says, including time spent at his family's vacation home outside Wellsboro, Pa.

Hughes is a graduate of

Abington High School and Pennsylvania State University, where he knew almost instantly "I was doing the right thing" in studying landscape architecture. He also did graduate work at the University of Massachusetts.

His resumé includes jobs at plant nurseries, landscape architectural and planning firms, and the U.S. Forest Service. He has restored wetlands and woodlands and worked on suburban subdivision landscapes, meadows, and residential projects, including a highly idiosyncratic Bucks County, Pa., second home belonging to New Yorkers Todd Ruback and Suzanne Schecter.

The couple's 2 1/2-acre property, overlooking the Delaware Canal in Upper Black Eddy, Pa., features a converted century-old barn that backs up to a gravelly 200-foot red shale cliff that was choked with exotic vines. Hughes cleared the cliff and literally carved a landscape into it, choosing wildlife-friendly plants such as Eastern prickly pear cactus, the region's only native cactus, that grows almost exclusively along the high cliffs of the Delaware River.

"He's not bringing in eucalyptus trees," Ruback says. "He's making use of what local, Bucks County nature is giving us."

And much of what Hughes takes away from "Bucks County nature" goes toward his rustic furniture. The results, says a mentor, Daniel Mack of Warwick, N.Y., are both sturdy and playful, and demonstrate "a poetic sensibility."

"Nobody actually needs any of these chairs. There are plenty of chairs in the world already, thank you," says Mack, a rustic-furniture teacher and author. "You've gone beyond need, and you're into another realm."

It's a realm, Mack says, that "engages us with the landscape in a way you don't see with more-anonymous furniture."

Mexico's 'water monster' may have disappeared

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico's salamander-like axolotl may have disappeared from its only known natural habitat in Mexico City's few remaining lakes.

It's disturbing news for an admittedly ugly creature, which has a slimy tail, plumage-like gills and mouth that curls into an odd smile.

The axolotl is known as the "water monster" and the "Mexican walking fish." Its only natural habitat is the Xochimilco network of lakes and canals—the "floating gardens" of earth piled on reed mats that the Aztecs built to grow crops but are now suffering from pollution and urban sprawl.

Biologist Armando Tovar Garza of Mexico's National Autonomous University said Tuesday that the creature "is in serious risk of disappearing" from the wild.

Describing an effort last year by researchers in skiffs to try to net axolotls in the shallow, muddy waters of Xochimilco, Tovar Garza summed up the results as "four months of sampling—zero axolotls."

Some axolotls still survive in aquariums, water tanks and research labs, but experts said those conditions aren't the best, because of interbreeding and other risks.

Growing up to a foot long (30

centimeters), axolotls use four stubby legs to drag themselves along the bottom or thick tails to swim in Xochimilco's murky channels while feeding on aquatic insects, small fish and crustaceans. But the surrounding garden-islands have increasingly been converted to illicit shantytowns, with untreated sewage often running off into the water.

The Mexican Academy of Sciences said in a statement that a 1998 survey found an average of 6,000 axolotls per square kilometer, a figure that dropped to 1,000 in a 2003 study, and 100 in a 2008 survey.

Tovar Garza said it is too early

to declare the axolotl extinct in its natural habitat. He said that in early February, researchers will begin a three-month search in hopes of finding what may be the last free-roaming axolotl.

The searches "on almost all the canals have to be repeated, because now we are in the cold season, with lower temperatures, and that is when we ought to have more success with the axolotls, because it is when they breed," Tovar Garza said.

Alarmed by the creature's falling numbers in recent years, researchers built axolotl "shelters" in Xochimilco.

Sacks of rocks and reedy plants act as filters around a se-



In this Sept. 27, 2008 file photo, a salamander-like axolotl, also known as the "water monster" and the "Mexican walking fish," swims in a tank at the Chapultepec Zoo in Mexico City.

lected area, and cleaner water is pumped in, to create better conditions. The shelters also were intended to help protect the axo-

lotls from non-native carp and tilapia that were introduced to the lake system years ago and compete with axolotls for food.

Life & Style

Stars line up to pay tribute to The Beatles

By CHRIS TALBOTT
AP MUSIC WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—There's an easy way to give pop music's most performance-hardened stars a case of the butterflies: Ask them to perform in front of The Beatles.

Many of today's top artists gathered Monday night to honor The Beatles' legacy, with Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr in attendance and late members John Lennon and George Harrison always in mind, at The Recording Academy's taping of "The Night That Changed America: A Grammy Salute to The Beatles."

John Legend and Alicia Keys sang "Let It Be." Katy Perry performed "Yesterday," while her boyfriend, John Mayer, teamed with Keith Urban on "Don't Let Me Down." And Brad Paisley and Pharrell Williams took on the challenge of "Here Comes the Sun," a song well known to millions of music fans.

"We are honoring the most important band of all time, and trying to do justice to their song while two of them sit there," Paisley said in an interview before his performance. "We know, going in, we're not go-

ing to sing like them, and we're going to try to do our own thing with it. But ... there's reasons why people get blasted when they cover Beatles songs in any situation. But here we are, we're all doing that tonight. So, I guess it's an even playing field in that sense."

It was until McCartney and Starr took the stage, turning what had been a fairly sedate affair into an arm-in-arm sing-along of hits "Hey, Jude," "Sgt. Pepper" and "Yellow Submarine" that prompted movie stars and Grammy Award-winning musicians alike to sing along like giddy kids.

The telecast will air Feb. 9 on CBS, 50 years after The Fab Four made their first appearance in front of an American TV audience on "The Ed Sullivan Show." It was a historic moment with more than 73 million Americans tuning in, changing pop culture in profound ways.



Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr perform at The Night that Changed America: A Grammy Salute to the Beatles, on Monday, Jan. 27, 2014, in Los Angeles.

Even so, McCartney told the crowd he was hesitant to agree to commemorate it.

"What can I say about this evening, it's just amazing," he said. "At first when I was asked to do the show, I was wondering if it was the right thing to do. Was it seemly to tribute yourself? But I saw a couple of American guys who said to

me, 'You don't understand the impact of that appearance on the show on America.' I didn't realize that."

Grammy producer Ken Ehrlich said the tribute event was more than a decade in the making and was produced at the Los Angeles Convention Center with archival footage from the band's "Ed Sullivan" era as well

as their psychedelic and hirsute, hipster periods.

Maroon 5 kicked off the show by re-creating the opening moments of the Feb. 9, 1964, appearance with "All My Loving," then "Ticket to Ride." Keys and Legend faced each other as they sat at matching black baby grand pianos. Mayer and Urban traded guitar licks, as did Gary

Clark Jr. and Joe Walsh on "As My Guitar Gently Weeps." Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart of The Eurythmics reunited to play "The Fool on the Hill."

Dave Grohl and Jeff Lynne hammered deep cut "Hey, Bulldog," and Harrison's son Dhani joined Lynne and Joe Walsh on his father's classic "Something." Stevie Wonder performed "We Can Work It Out" twice, asking for a retake after a slow start on his first attempt.

"Fire me, sue me," he joked with the crowd.

Starr took the stage next and marveled at Wonder's appearance: "I've got to tell you, what a thrill following Stevie Wonder."

The drummer performed three songs alone, including "Yellow Submarine" at the request of Grohl's young daughter. McCartney took the stage next for five songs of his own before Starr returned for a finale that included a group singalong of "Hey, Jude." It was the first time the two had performed together since 2010.

"We were in a band. It's called The Beatles," Starr said near the end of the show. "And if we play, John and George are always with us. It's always John, Paul, George and Ringo."

Stradivarius stolen from Milwaukee concertmaster

MILWAUKEE (AP)—A 300-year-old "priceless" Stradivarius violin was stolen from the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's concertmaster during an armed robbery after a performance at a local Lutheran college, police said Tuesday.

The rare violin was on loan to concertmaster Frank Almond.

The robber used a stun gun on Almond and took the instrument from him shortly before 10:30 p.m. Monday in a parking lot in the rear of Wisconsin Lutheran College, where Almond had just preformed, Police Chief Edward Flynn said.

Flynn said the violin was valued in the "high seven figures,"

the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported. Investigators believe the instrument, known in musical circles as the "Lipinski" Stradivarius, was the primary target, the chief said.

"The artistic heritage of Milwaukee was assaulted and robbed last night," Flynn told reporters.

As Almond lay on the pavement, the robber fled to a nearby vehicle, described as a maroon or burgundy minivan driven by an accomplice, which then left the scene, Flynn said.

In a 2008 *Journal Sentinel* story, Chicago violin dealer Stefan Hersh said the violin's value could be comparable to another

Stradivarius that sold for more than \$3.5 million in 2006.

The instrument, crafted in 1715, was on indefinite loan to Almond from its anonymous owners. Almond has characterized the owners as people with "strong ties to Milwaukee."

The violin's previous owners include virtuoso Giuseppe

Tartini, who was known for his "Devil's Trill" Sonata, and Polish violinist Karol Lipinski.

In a 2013 interview, Almond explained that the Lipinski is "finicky" about temperature and humidity, responding differently some days than others.

Almond conducted an online campaign to fund "A Violin's Life," a recording that memorialized the history of the violin.

UK lawmakers tell queen to cut costs, boost income

LONDON (AP)—Britain's royal household needs to get a little more entrepreneurial, eye possible staff cuts and replace an ancient palace boiler, lawmakers say in a new report.

The report published Tuesday on the finances of Queen Elizabeth II has exposed crumbling palaces and depleted coffers, and discovered that a royal reserve fund for emergencies is down to its last million pounds (\$1.6 million).

Legislators on the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee urged royal officials to adopt a more commercial approach and suggested opening up Buckingham Palace to visitors more often.

The panel said the royal household needed more cash to address a serious maintenance backlog on crumbling palaces. It said at least 39 percent of royal buildings—and

probably more—were in an unacceptable state, "with some properties in a dangerous or deteriorating condition."

"The boiler in Buckingham Palace is 60 years old," committee chair Margaret Hodge told the BBC. "The household must get a much firmer grip on how it plans to address its maintenance backlog."

In words that have become familiar to Britons during five years of austerity, Hodge urged the royals "to do more with less."

The report pointed out that the royal household's staff has remained largely static at just over 430 people in the last seven years, a period that has seen deep cuts to public spending and thousands of civil service layoffs.

Hodge, a Labour Party lawmaker, said Buckingham Palace was only open to the public 78 days a year, drawing half a mil-



This is a Sunday, Nov. 10, 2013 file photo of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II as she listens during the service of remembrance at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London.

lion visitors, and suggested that boosting visitor numbers could help raise funds.

"We think a little bit of a more commercial approach by those who are responsible for serving

the queen would serve her better in garnering more income," Hodge said.

The queen received 31 million pounds (\$51 million) from taxpayers in 2012-2013, but Hodge said the monarch "has not been served well by the household and by the Treasury," which is responsible for overseeing royal costs.

The report said because of overspending, the royal Reserve Fund had shrunk from 3.3 million pounds to 1 million pounds in 2012-2013, a historic low that raised fears "it could be unable to cover its expenditure on any unforeseen events."

Buckingham Palace said in a statement it had boosted its income by almost 5 million pounds between 2007 and 2013, and "work on income generation continues." It said it was working to carry out essential maintenance and had recently removed asbestos from the basement of Buckingham Palace.

Nurse Nathan Filer wins Britain's Costa Book Award

LONDON (AP)—Mental health nurse Nathan Filer has won Britain's Costa Book Award for his saga of schizophrenia, "The Shock of the Fall."

The novel, Filer's first, charts the story of two brothers split by a boyhood accident, taking the reader into the surviving sibling's mind as he struggles to deal with mental illness and the fallout from his brother's death.

Filer—who has only just been married—told the BBC the story was tinged with sadness but he believed the main character was one that readers would like to spend time with.

Filer's book is published in the United States as "Where The Moon Isn't."

The Costa Book Award is worth 30,000 pounds (roughly \$50,000). It's open to writers based in Britain and Ireland.

Motley Crue to retire, plan 72 goodbye concerts

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Motley Crue is hanging up its guitars for good.

The heavy metal band plans to say goodbye with 72 concerts before retiring. The rockers made the announcement at a press conference Tuesday in Hollywood.

Alice Cooper will tour with the group. Tickets go on sale Friday.

A Motley Crue tribute album is in the works, as is a big-screen version of the band's 2002 book, "The Dirt."



In this Aug. 18, 2011 file photo, from left, Vince Neil, Nikki Sixx, Mick Mars and Tommy Lee of the band Motley Crue pose together onstage at a tribute to the band to launch the 4th Annual Sunset Strip Music Festival in West Hollywood, Calif. AP

Tabloid reporter says Coulson knew about hacking

LONDON (AP)—A tabloid reporter who has pleaded guilty to phone hacking said Tuesday that he played the News of the World's editor a hacked voicemail left for actor Daniel Craig by actress Sienna Miller, with whom he was having an affair.

Dan Evans is a prosecution witness at the trial of his former boss, Andy Coulson, and six others, on charges related to wrongdoing at the now-shuttered Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid.

Evans told the trial that in 2005 he eavesdropped on Craig's voicemails and heard a message from a woman saying: "Hi, it's me. Cannot speak. I'm at the Groucho (Club) with Jude. I love you."

The call came from Miller's number. The newspaper later ran a story alleging an affair between the actress—then involved with Jude Law—and future 007 Craig.

Evans said Coulson heard the recording, then told him how to cover his tracks by making a copy, putting it in a bag and taking it to the newspaper's reception so it would look like it had been dropped off anonymously.

Evans has pleaded guilty to phone hacking at both the News of the World and the rival Sunday Mirror. On Monday he told the court he had accessed voicemails more than 1,000 times in all while at the News of the World between 2005 and 2010.

Murdoch shut the tabloid in 2011 after details emerged of the scale of its snooping on celebrities, politicians and others in the public eye.

Coulson, who edited the paper between 2003 and 2007, denies charges including phone hacking. The other six defendants also have pleaded not guilty.

Coulson served as communications director to Prime Minister David Cameron before resigning because of the scandal.

Feb. 14 arraignment date for Bieber arrest

MIAMI (AP)—Pop singer Justin Bieber has a Valentine's Day date with a South Florida judge on charges of driving under the influence, resisting arrest and driving with an expired license.

A Miami-Dade County judge on Tuesday set a Feb. 14 arraignment date for the 19-year-old star. In an arraignment, prosecutors formally file charges and a plea is entered, although a defendant's lawyer can enter the plea in writing. Bieber might not be required to attend.

Bieber and R&B singer Khalil Amir Sharieff were arrested last week in Miami Beach during what police de-



scribed as an illegal street drag race between a Lamborghini and a Ferrari. Neither has been charged with drag racing.

Police say Bieber admitted to smoking marijuana, drinking and taking a prescription medication.

Rapper Flavor Flav released without bail in NY



Flavor Flav speaks with reporters following an appearance in Nassau County District Court in Hempstead, N.Y., on Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014. AP

HEMPSTEAD, New York (AP)—A New York judge has released Flavor Flav without bail in his speeding case.

Police say the rapper, whose real name is William Drayton, was speeding and driving without a license en route to his mother's funeral on Jan. 9. The rapper pleaded not guilty Tuesday.

Drayton was accused of driving 79 mph (127 kph) in a 55 mph (88 kph) zone. Police say he also had a small amount of marijuana.

His lawyer told the judge that she has taken care of 16 outstanding traffic matters.

Drayton had to remove his trademark clock from around his neck to pass through the metal detector. After court, he told journalists that "God is good."

Daughter acts like a winner, but still feels like a loser

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 27-year-old woman who still lives at home. I do it so I can help my mom with my five nieces and nephews. Their mother passed away suddenly in 2009 at the age of 30. My mom and stepdad kept them rather than scatter them to fathers who don't appear very interested in them.

Since my sister's death I have earned two degrees, entered the health care field and have lost almost 140 pounds. Despite what I have accomplished, I feel I have nothing to show for myself. When I point my accomplishments out to myself, they don't seem like a heck of a lot. What can I do so I can stop feeling like a loser?

LOST IN THE NORTHEAST

DEAR LOST: A loser? From where I sit, you appear to be not only a caring daughter, but also an intellectually accomplished young woman who is being very hard on herself. If you feel you haven't accomplished a lot, I have to question the yardstick you're using.

It's time you discussed your feelings with a licensed mental health professional who can help you understand what is causing your low self-esteem. If you do, it may help you be kinder to yourself, because what's currently going on in your head is unfair to you and destructive.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I work in a buffet restaurant. I wish you would alert your readers to how waste increases the costs at restaurants like this one. And then people complain because the cost of the food goes up!

I have seen customers stick their fingers or used utensils into pans of food to taste it before serving themselves. And instead of the tongs we provide, they use their hands to help themselves to chicken, bread, etc.

The fact is that once anyone touches the food with his or her hands or eating utensil, the restaurant is required by the health code to dispose of the entire pan of food. This causes tremendous waste. Customers also overfill their plates only to throw half the food away. It makes me sad because so many people in this world are hungry.

I have seen children run around, making a mess of the dessert bar, and especially the ice cream and drink stations. Their parents seem to think it's "cute."

I wish you would remind your readers to use common sense when dining out and to PLEASE control their children. The parents should serve food to their little ones who don't know better.

FRUSTRATED BUFFET WORKER, PUEBLO, COLO.

DEAR FRUSTRATED: Children can't practice behavior they haven't been taught, and parents who don't take the time to explain proper behavior to their little ones are shirking their responsibility.

As to adults who have so little understanding of hygiene—or consideration for others—that they put their hands or used utensils into food that is meant for others, well—perhaps after being reminded that it raises the prices they have to pay, they'll think twice about it. But don't bet on it.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I was wondering what is the appropriate level of give and take in a friendship? I notice that in some relationships I am always giving and never receiving, where in others I am always receiving. How do you know when a balance is reached?

JAKE IN ALBANY, GA.

DEAR JAKE: There is give and take in all healthy relationships. A "balance is reached" when you can give without feeling used, and take without feeling guilty that you're being given too much.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

CHART TOPPERS

The top 10 songs and albums on the iTunes Store for the week ending Jan 26, 2014:

TOP SONGS

1. "Dark Horse (feat. Juicy J)", Katy Perry
2. "Talk Dirty (feat. 2 Chainz)", Jason Derulo
3. "Happy (from 'Despicable Me 2')", Pharrell Williams
4. "The Man", Aloe Blacc
5. "Timber (feat. Ke\$ha)", Pitbull
6. "Say Something", Christina Aguilera, A Great Big World
7. "Pompeii", Bastille
8. "Team", Lorde
9. "Counting Stars", OneRepublic
10. "Let It Go", Idina Menzel

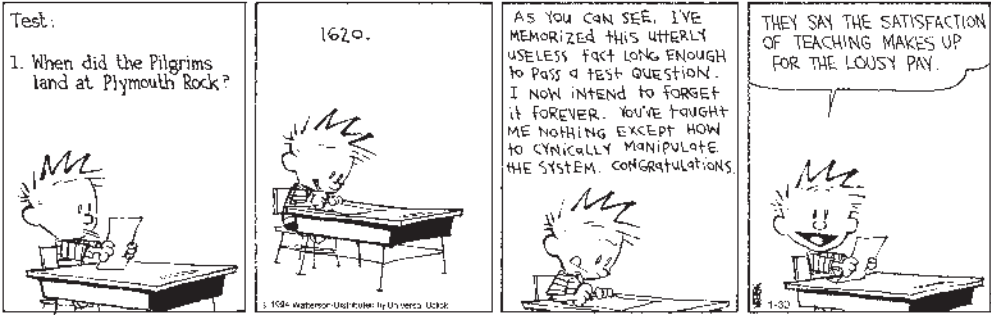
TOP ALBUMS

1. "Frozen", Various Artists
2. "BEYONCÉ", Beyoncé
3. "Pure Heroine", Lorde
4. "Oxymoron (Deluxe Version)", Schoolboy Q
5. "Mind Over Matter", Young the Giant
6. "2014 GRAMMY Nominees", Various Artists
7. "Night Visions", Imagine Dragons
8. "Is There Anybody Out There?", A Great Big World
9. "Bad Blood", Bastille
10. "PRISM", Katy Perry

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



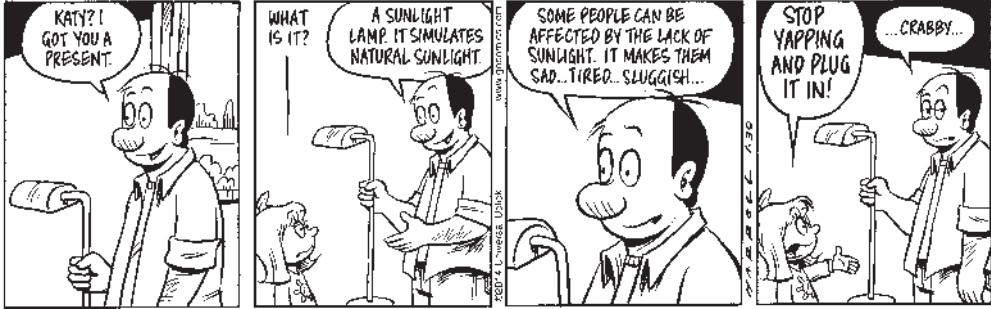
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Guys' counter-parts

5 Supple-ments, with "out"

9 Violinist's need

12 Portent

13 Present

14 Japanese sash

15 Elba exile

17 Zero

18 14-legged crus-tacean

19 Lucy's pal

21 Circle ratio

22 FCC concern

24 Infant

27 Bear hair

28 Urban blight

31 Past

32 Likely

33 "— Got a Secret"

34 Lairs

36 "— Miser-ables"

37 Vegan's no-no

38 Aesopian tale

40 Mother cook-off dish

41 Texas Philadel-phia team

43 "Have a nice trip!"

51 Sheltered side

52 Grease up

53 Unsigned (Abbr.)

54 Donkey

55 List- ending abbr.

56 Relax

3 Carson suc-cessor

4 Stylish

5 "Zounds!"

6 White wine aperitif

7 Small salaman-der

8 Trusty horse

9 Good-natured friendli-ness

10 Stage statuette

11 Volition

16 Luau side dish

20 "— the season ..."

22 Coin of India

23 Crafts' mates

24 Lousy

25 Census statistic

26 Home-coming traditions

27 Collapse

29 Eggs

30 Obtain

35 Bando of base-ball

37 Hungar-ian

39 Sacred text

40 Name in China's history

41 Pop flavor

42 Shades

43 Big name in dare-devilry

44 Highway division

45 Holly-wood clashers

46 Trans-mitted

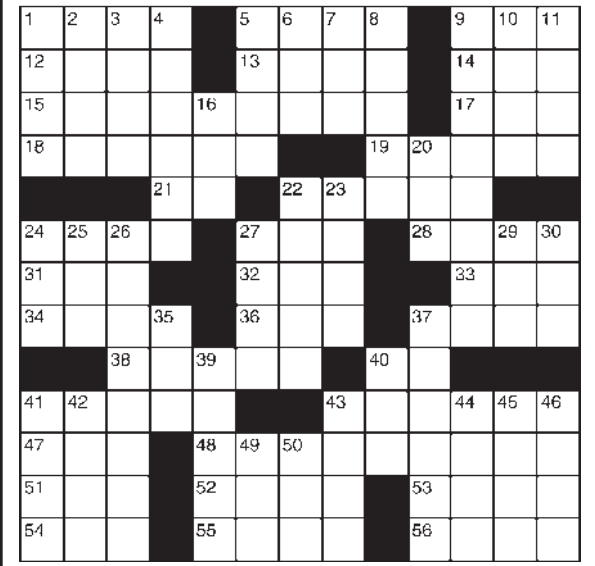
49 No longer chic

50 Cagers' org.

Solution time: 25 mins.

CHAR SOB SCAR
CASE QUC ERNE
DRAMBUITE VATIL
IMP AIA FIIMSY
PAR YELP
ARG MEW ALOHA
MARC DOG ENOS
SHAH S WAD SEA
MAKE LOP
PREMIX LOUCHE
EURO TRAMP IED
ASCI RAN AURA
KEYS APT SEJEM

Yesterday's answer 1-30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Wilmer Valderrama, 34; Christian Bale, 40; Phil Collins, 63; Charles S. Dutton, 63.

Happy Birthday: Pick up the pace, set reasonable goals and make your mark. Focus on changes that are concrete and industrious. Avoid personal changes based on whims rather than a well thought out and researched plan. Less spending will help ease your stress. A change to the way you present what you have to offer will add to your appeal. Your numbers are 5, 16, 22, 24, 28, 32, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Reacting too fast will leave you little wiggle room as the facts unfold. A careful and thoughtful assessment will enable you to call in the appropriate help to manage the damage. Protect your heart and your health. ★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Keep a steady pace and you'll reach your destination. Emotions will be difficult to control. Let your feelings be known and you will know where you stand and what your options are. Clear the air and prepare to make changes. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Express your thoughts and ideas and you will get the support required to make changes to your life and your future. Refuse to overspend on items, products or a sales pitch promising the impossible. Choose reason over false hope. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Make a change that will alter your income or help you come to an agreement that gives you greater financial freedom. Contracts, settlements

and investments are favored if you stick to a formula that is safe and offers a steady profit. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Talk matters over if you have doubts regarding your relationship with someone. Whether it is a personal, financial or professional connection, honesty will make it much easier to pick and choose your next move. Take responsibility for your actions. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Take time out and focus on your looks, appeal and what you can offer someone who interests you. Get back to basics and start a healthy regime that includes proper eating habits and exercise. Ask and you will receive help reaching your goals. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): The more you interact with others, the greater your chance will become to explore new concepts, possibilities and partnerships with people who share your interests. A change may not be welcome, but it will end up being beneficial. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Keep your emotions in check and follow through with your plans. Let your intuition guide you regarding matters of the heart and home. A move or change to the way you live will give you greater perspective regarding future possibilities. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Take care of business matters personally. Don't leave anything to chance and be prepared to make a quick decision in regards to a new contract or settlement. A change at home may upset a relationship but it will benefit you emotionally. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Put in the effort and don't stop until you reach your deadline. Live up to your promises and stand behind whatever it is you do. Expect opposition and be ready for whatever challenge comes your way. Strive for equality in personal relationships. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Keep close tabs on what everyone is doing. Offer suggestions, but don't take on responsibilities that don't belong to you. A good idea will pay off if you follow through. A change in the way you approach work will bring positive results. ★★

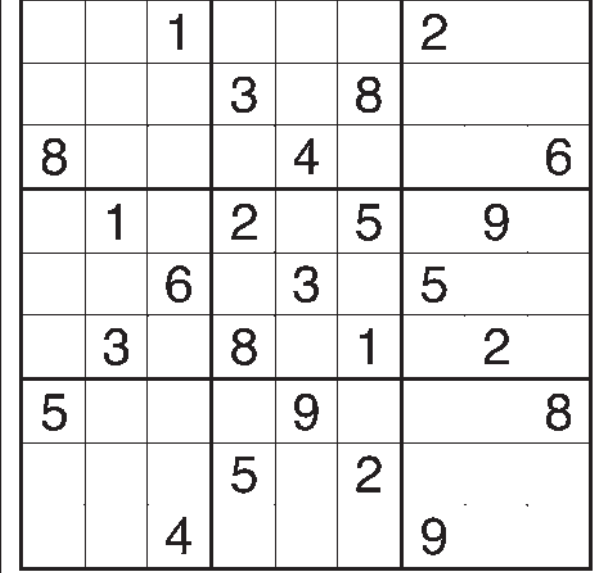
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't share your secrets. A financial offer may end up costing you instead of bringing you profits. Socializing or greater involvement in a cause or volunteer group that interests you will boost your popularity and promote new friendships. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are inquisitive and inventive. You are strong-willed and persistent.

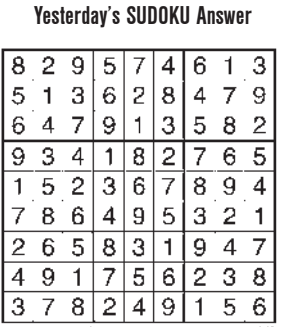
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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green



Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.



Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/30
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WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

FAMILY BONDS Solution: 10 letters

N D E T S U R T E A M O D E L
O O C S N I S U O C P R N D A
I O I F R I E N D S S S E I U
T H V T S C R B B H R S F U G
C D D S A E A A A O D E E G H
E L A O G R C R L K N N D T S
N I U D N H E R E I I D E L N
N H N E O A C P E T M N S P O
O C I H L P S Y O T A I G G S
C J Q E A P T G L O S K S S
H O U I T Y E I O O C L E A E
C K E R U T A M V I Y E C R L
T E A C H G A M E E O A A D A
A T N E M P O L E V E D L N S
W G R O W T R O P P U S M P T

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Adoptive, Advice, Along, Assist, Baking, Bonds, Calm, Caretaker, Childhood, Connection, Cooperation, Cousins, Defend, Development, Friends, Game, Grow, Guard, Guide, Happy, Heir, Joke, Kindness, Last, Laugh, Leads, Lessons, Love, Loyal, Mature, Model, Older, Play, Secrets, Share, Similar, Spend, Support, Teach, Team, Together, Toys, Trust, Unique, Watch
Yesterday's Answer: Pitch
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Rockets rally for 97-90 win over Spurs



HOUSTON (AP)—Dwight Howard scored 23 points, Terrence Jones had 21 and the Houston Rockets held on for a 97-90 win over the San Antonio Spurs on Tuesday night.

The Rockets trailed by as many as 15 points in the first half before scoring 33 in the third quarter to go on top. San Antonio used an 11-3 spurt to pull within two in the final minutes, but Howard and Jeremy Lin helped Houston hold on for the win.

Boris Diaw scored a season-high 22 points for the Spurs, and also had 11 rebounds. Tony Parker added 17 points and Tim Duncan had 12 points, 14 rebounds and four blocks.

The Rockets were without leading scorer James Harden (bruised left thumb), who is averaging 23.7 points per game this season. But Jones stepped up in his absence and Lin had 18 points and eight assists while starting in Harden's spot.

Houston was clinging to a 90-88 lead with less than two minutes left when Howard had a dunk and Lin made a jumper. Duncan had a layup on the other end, but Lin sunk a pair of free throws to secure the victory.

Houston has won all three meetings with the Southwest Division-leading Spurs this season. San Antonio's 90-point performance ended a streak of 15 straight games with at least 100 points. The last time they were held below 100 was a 111-98 loss to Houston on Christmas Day.

The Spurs got within six on a hook shot by Diaw early in the fourth quarter. Lin then scored five quick points to extend Houston's lead to 81-70.

Houston was up by four points with four minutes left in the third quarter when San Antonio resorted to the "Hack-a-Howard" defense, fouling the center every time the Rockets got the ball. Howard finished 13 of 25 on free throws and had 16 rebounds.

The Spurs employed the strategy on eight straight possessions, with Howard making 10 foul shots while they had six points as Houston extended its lead to 70-62.

Diaw made a jump shot at the end of the third quarter to cut Houston's lead to 72-64 entering the fourth.

The Rockets opened the second half with an 11-2 run, capped by a two-handed dunk by Howard, to take their first lead of the game at 50-48. Lin started the run with a 3-pointer and also had two free throws in the surge.

Manu Ginobili made four free throws for San Antonio before Houston scored six straight points to take a 56-52 lead.

Ginobili and Chandler Parsons then exchanged rim-rattling dunks in rapid succession. The 36-year-old Ginobili appeared to injure himself on his jam and was soon limping and holding his upper left leg. He remained in the game for a bit before walking off the court and into the locker room at the next timeout.



Houston Rockets' Dwight Howard (12) looks to the basket while San Antonio Spurs' Tim Duncan (21) had a hand on his back during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014, in Houston.

The team said he had tightness in his left hamstring.

San Antonio led by 10 points in the second quarter before Howard made his first basket of the night after starting the game 0 for 8. The bucket was the first of five straight points for Howard with San Antonio's only points in that stretch coming on a layup by Marco Belinelli, helping Houston close to 46-39 at halftime.

Houston struggled early without Harden and San Antonio jumped to a 9-0 lead thanks to five points from Diaw. The Spurs pushed the lead to 21-6 with about five minutes left in the first.

Grizzlies 98, Trail Blazers 91

In Portland, Oregon, Zach Randolph scored 23 points and had 10 rebounds, and Mike Conley added 19 points and seven assists to lead Memphis.

Marc Gasol had 15 points and eight rebounds and Courtney Lee scored 12 points for the Grizzlies (23-20), who have won three straight and seven of eight.

Lamarus Aldridge had 27 points and 16 rebounds as the Blazers (33-13) slipped three games behind Northwest Division-leading Oklahoma City and had their home winning streak snapped at five.

Randolph, the former Blazers forward, registered his 27th double-double of the season as well as his franchise-leading 190th for the Grizzlies, who shot 51.8 percent and led from start to finish.

Pacers 104, Lakers 92

In Los Angeles, David West scored 19 points, Lance Stephenson had 15 points and 14 rebounds, and Indiana wrapped up a five-game road trip by beating the spiraling Lakers.

George Hill had 13 points and seven rebounds for the Pacers, who stayed atop the overall NBA standings despite losing twice on their West Coast trip. Los Angeles kept it close into the second half before the Pacers finished an easy win over the injury-riddled Lakers, who have lost five straight.

All-Star selection Paul George had his second straight rough game for Indiana, scoring 14 points on 4-for-21 shooting.

Pau Gasol had 21 points and 13 rebounds for the Lakers, who returned from a two-week road trip for their 17th loss in 20 games.

Wizards 88, Warriors 85

In Oakland, California, Bradley Beal scored 18 of his 20 points in the second half, and John Wall had 15 points and eight rebounds to lead Washington.

Washington's terrific tandem outplayed and outthrust Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson when it mattered most in a matchup of two of the NBA's best young backcourts.

Beal, who was 1-of-7 shooting in the first half, finished 8 of 19 from the floor to go with seven rebounds and four assists. Wall hit a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 1:28 remaining,

and the Wizards forced the Warriors into several difficult shots in the closing moments.

Stephen Curry scored 23 points before missing a contested left-handed 3-pointer as time expired, and Thompson had 13 points and six rebounds for the streaky Warriors.

Pelicans 100, Cavaliers 89

In Cleveland, Anthony Davis scored 30 points with eight blocks and seven rebounds and Eric Gordon scored 20 to lead New Orleans.

Davis, one of three No. 1 overall picks in the game, was dominant at both ends of the floor as the Pelicans won their third straight. He injured fingers on his left hand in the final minutes, but got taped up during a timeout and stayed in.

New Orleans scored 16 straight points to close the first half and opened a 22-point lead in the third, causing some fans to boo the listless Cavaliers.

Kyrie Irving scored 23 and Dion Waiters 21 for the Cavs, who had a 1-4 homestand after a 3-2 trip out West.

Cavs rookie Anthony Bennett, the first pick in last year's draft, scored a season-high 15.

Knicks 114, Celtics 88

In New York, Carmelo Anthony had 24 points and nine rebounds in 28 minutes as New York avenged an embarrassing home loss.

Jeremy Tyler added a career-high 17 points and fellow reserve J.R. Smith also scored 17 for the Knicks, who lost by 41 last time the Celtics came to Madison Square Garden but led this one by 35. New York won its third straight to even its record at 3-3 on its eight-game homestand, with games remaining against Cleveland on Thursday and Miami on Saturday.

New York is only a half-game out of the eighth and final Eastern Conference playoff spot despite its 18-27 record.

Jeff Green scored 14 points for the Celtics, who have lost three straight and six of seven. Rajon Rondo had seven points and five assists, shooting 3 of 13 in his sixth game of the season after returning from a torn ACL.

Pistons 103, Magic 87

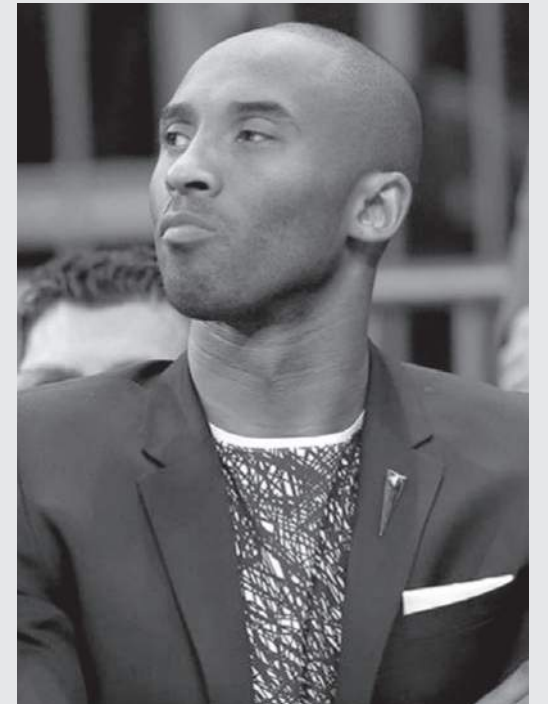
In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Andre Drummond had 13 points and 17 rebounds as Detroit snapped a four-game losing streak.

Drummond bounced back from a poor outing at Dallas over the weekend, and the Pistons led comfortably throughout the second half. Detroit has struggled to close out games at home this season, but this time the Pistons turned a double-digit lead into a rout.

Brandon Jennings had 20 points and eight assists for Detroit, and Josh Smith added 16 points. Victor Oladipo scored 19 points for the Magic.

Detroit finished with 17 offensive rebounds—12 in the first half—and outscored Orlando in the paint 44-22.

Lakers' Bryant expected to miss All-Star game



Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant looks on from the bench during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden, Sunday, Jan. 26, 2014, in New York.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kobe Bryant is expected to miss the NBA All-Star game due to continued pain and swelling in his injured left knee.

The Los Angeles Lakers provided an injury update on the superstar guard Tuesday night, saying Bryant will be out for at least three more weeks before he is re-examined.

Bryant was voted a starter in the All-Star game, which is in New Orleans on Feb. 16—less than three weeks away. Bryant had previously said he hoped fans wouldn't vote for him, but the fourth-leading scorer in NBA history was elected to the game for the 16th straight time anyway.

Lakers team physician Steve Lombardo examined Bryant after he returned from the Lakers' two-week road trip for Tuesday's home game against Indiana, and the results apparently weren't encouraging.

Bryant broke a bone in his knee Dec. 17, just six games into his return from an eight-month recovery of his torn left Achilles tendon. The Lakers initially speculated he would be out for six weeks with his knee injury, but Bryant will be out much longer.

Bryant will continue with a program of light exercise, including time on a stationary bike. He has spoken openly of the difficulty of the rehabilitation and its slow pace.

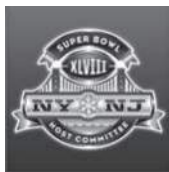
Assuming Bryant is unable to play in the All-Star game, the NBA will pick his replacement on the West team. The West coach would pick a new starter.

Even before Bryant's latest update, the Lakers' injury situation was unrelentingly daunting. Los Angeles had lost 16 of 19 heading into its visit from the NBA-leading Pacers.

Point guard Steve Nash is hoping to play Friday against Charlotte, but the two-time MVP has played just six games this season with nerve problems in his back.

Steve Blake, who hasn't played since Dec. 10 with an elbow injury, still isn't cleared for full practices, while fellow point guard Jordan Farmar has been out since New Year's Eve with a hamstring injury. Swingman Xavier Henry hasn't played in a month while healing a bone bruise in his right knee.

Super Bowl circus takes center stage



NEWARK, N.J. (AP)—Internet star Lil Terrio danced with cheerlead-

ers, an Austrian man dressed as Mozart, another guy wore a Waldo costume and Nickelodeon's Pick Boy was in the house.

Welcome to Media Day, the annual Super Bowl circus.

It seems fitting this event was held at a hockey rink, of all places, because there's nothing ordinary about it. More than 6,000 journalists, pseudo-journalists and other credentialed "media" from all over the world gathered at the home of the NHL's New Jersey Devils on Tuesday to meet the Denver Broncos and Seattle Seahawks.

Strange questions were the norm instead of football ones. A man asked Seahawks center Max Unger if he could touch his long, scruffy beard. He said yes. A woman asked Seahawks defensive lineman Brandon Mebane for a kiss. He said no.

Perhaps the only player who felt at home was Seattle tight end Luke Willson. He grew up in Canada, played hockey through his sophomore year of high school and was genuinely psyched to be in an NHL arena.

"I thought it was kind of cool to be here," said Willson, a fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs. "I was a left winger, grinding forward-type of guy. I have two brothers and we would play on the street in front of the house, go to spring camps, played all the time. I played a lot of hockey."

Asked if any of his teammates could lace up the skates, Willson was brutally honest: "No, definitely not. No way."

Unger, the 6-foot-5, 305-pound



Seattle Seahawks' Marshawn Lynch smiles during media day for the NFL Super Bowl XLVIII football game Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014, in Newark, N.J. AP

lineman, played roller hockey long before he packed on the pounds for a career in the NFL.

"This is an awesome venue, seems like a great place to play hockey," he said. "I watch a little bit of hockey. We have the Vancouver Canucks up the road."

Coincidentally, while football players spent their day at the rink, a couple of New

York hockey teams prepared to play an outdoor game at Yankee Stadium. The Rangers and Islanders will continue the NHL's Stadium Series in the Bronx on Wednesday night.

Seahawks defensive end Benson Mayowa isn't a fan of the sport, but he appreciates the toughness of hockey players.

"Only thing I like to watch in hockey is fights," he said.

"But they do get physical, they lose teeth, get stitched up and come back out there. It's the same as football."

But hockey has nothing like this on its calendar.

The Media Day extravaganza is one of the wildest scenes in sports. Even current football players were in on the "reporting" action. Eagles Pro Bowl wide receiver DeSean Jack-

son co-hosted a show for BET. Steelers defensive end Brett Keisel interviewed players for a shampoo promotion.

"This is pretty crazy, man. Pretty crazy," Broncos defensive end Malik Jackson said. "I saw Waldo. I saw the superhero. They told us there were going to be people dressed up, but you never really know what to expect until

you see them."

Of course, a few celebrities also took part in the spectacle. Actor Nick Cannon wore a Peyton Manning jersey. Michelle Williams, former Destiny's Child singer, asked players to sing.

But the most popular person was Lil Terrio, who became famous for posting his "Ohhh, kill 'em" dance online. Players stopped to pose for pictures with him, interrupted their interviews to call him over and everyone who recognized him asked him to dance.

As for players, Manning and Seattle cornerback Richard Sherman were surrounded by the biggest throng of reporters. Manning deftly evaded questions about his "legacy" and Sherman was so eager to talk that he showed up early for his 60-minute session.

Several players captured the craziness on video. It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many players who may never get another chance to play in a Super Bowl.

"I wanted to share the experience with my family," said Seahawks receiver Golden Tate, who wore Google Glass and a Go Pro camera on his hat. "I wanted them to get some of the behind-the-scenes footage and see what it's like. It's my way of giving back and sharing with them."

Speaking of sharing, it was a no-brainer for the Devils to share their building with the NFL on the biggest day ahead of the Big Game.

"This is a 24-7 operation," said Scott O'Neil, chief executive officer of the Devils, Philadelphia 76ers and Prudential Center. "We have 200 events here a year and this is one of them. It's just with a huge media spotlight on it."

Broncos QB Manning 'had concerns' about comeback

NEWARK, N.J. (AP)—When Peyton Manning returned to the NFL after a series of neck operations that sidelined him for the entire 2011 season, there was plenty of talk about when—and even whether—he would return to the level of play that earned four MVP awards and two Super Bowl appearances.

He ignored others' voices.

He couldn't ignore his own questions.

"I certainly had my concerns that entire time," Manning said Tuesday at Super Bowl media day, less than a week before he'll lead the Denver Broncos against the Seattle Seahawks.

"I had my concerns, because the doctors just couldn't tell me anything definite. They wouldn't say, 'You're going to be back at this time, at 100 percent strength level.' They

couldn't tell me," he continued. "So when the doctors can't tell you that, how do you really know? It was a matter of a lot of faith and trust."

Manning scoffed as he recalled what some said as he prepared to move to the Broncos from the Indianapolis Colts.

"There was a lot of 'narrative' out there. That's kind of my new word for the year," he said with a smile.

"There was a lot of 'narrative' out there on what I couldn't do: 'He can't throw to the left.' And, 'He really struggles throwing to the right.' I'm like, 'How do they know? I've been throwing in private the entire time.' ... At the time, throwing to the left was about the only thing I could do well," Manning said. "So there was a lot of misinformation out there."

As it turned out, Manning would be just fine.

Last season, he led the Broncos to the playoffs, earning NFL Comeback Player of the Year honors.

"I kind of joked, 'I never wanted to be eligible for that award.' When you're injured and you're out for a year, I guess that's kind of what it gets labeled," Manning said. "I've got to call it more of a second chance, second opportunity."

Broncos coach John Fox called Manning's immediate success in Denver "truly remarkable."

"To build on that," Fox added, "and to have the kind of season he's had to this point this year, I think is unprecedented."

From the very moment it began in September—on opening night, Manning threw a

record-tying seven touchdown passes in a victory over the reigning champion Baltimore Ravens—this season has been all about Peyton.

In Year 2 of his second act, Manning threw for 55 touchdowns and 5,477 yards, both records. If the Broncos win Sunday, Manning will become the first starting quarterback to lead two franchises to Super Bowl titles.

Still, he has zero interest in discussing where his career stands.

As collected and measured as he is while scanning the field from the pocket, Manning coasted through the circus that is media day, opining on his family's favorite beer, politely evading silly questions about reality TV - and avoiding any wild pronouncements.

He deflected questions

about his accomplishments by talking about the "team" and "organization." He praised the Seahawks. He talked about how "excited" he is, how "exciting" this all is.

Others were less shy about characterizing Manning's place in the game.

Broncos receiver Demaryius Thomas: "I was nervous the first day I met him. ... He's definitely the best."

Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson: "He's one of the best—if not the best—quarterbacks to ever play the game. One day, I want to be like him, in terms of the way he thinks. He's just a master of the game."

Seahawks safety Kam Chancellor: "In my book, he ranks No. 1 at quarterback. I have tons of respect for that guy."

When reporters repeatedly

raised the word "legacy" to the 37-year-old Manning, he never took the bait.

Hardly surprising.

"I've been being asked about my legacy since I was about 25 years old. I'm not sure you can have a legacy when you're 25 years old. Even 37," Manning said in response to the first such query. "I'd like to have to be, like, 70 to have a legacy. I'm not even 100 percent sure what the word even means."

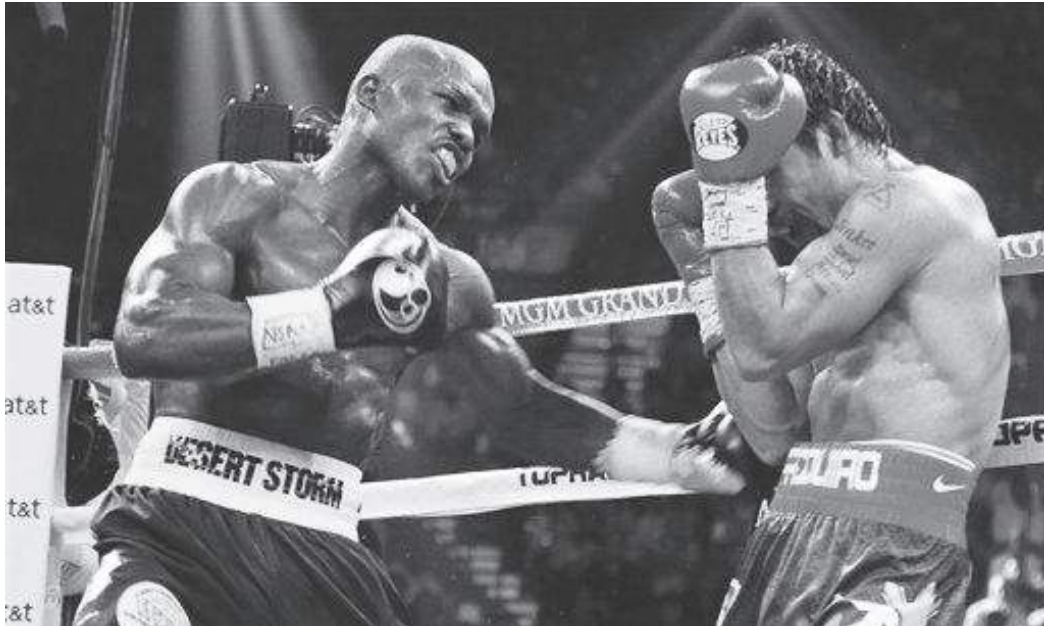
Then, in about the closest thing to a stumble, Manning continued: "I'm still in the middle of my career."

At least one of the dozens of assembled media members gasped, "Middle?!"

Realizing his miscue, Manning chuckled and went on.

"Let me rephrase that," he resumed. "I'm down the homestretch of my career, but I'm still in it. It's not over yet. And so it's still playing out."

Tim Bradley: Manny Pacquiao killer instinct gone



American boxer Timothy Bradley in action against the Philippines' Manny Pacquiao during their recent fight.

By ROY LUARCA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Has Manny Pacquiao lost his killer instinct?

Timothy Bradley thinks so, and believes it will serve him in good stead when they clash anew for the World Boxing Organization welterweight crown on April 12 in Las Vegas.

"He (Pacquiao) doesn't have that killer instinct," Bradley told fighthype.com. Sunday.

"Yeah, he didn't have that killer instinct in that (Brandon) Rios fight."

Bradley was referring to the Filipino ring superstar's 12-round domination of Rios last Nov. 24 in Macau.

Though Pacquiao won lopsidedly, Bradley felt there were

instances when the Fighter of the Decade could've finished off Rios, but didn't do so.

Instead, he said, Pacquiao chose to play it safe and coasted to victory.

Bradley said he believed that Pacquiao was a "little scared" of Rios' punching power.

The undefeated American noted that Pacquiao's reluctance to mix it up will work to his advantage when he dangles the title he wrested from the Filipino by a widely disputed split decision on June 9, 2012.

According to Bradley, he will legitimize that victory by beating Pacquiao convincingly this time.

Having repeatedly watched the tapes of their first encounter, Bradley said that though he isn't a power puncher in the mold of

Rios, he was able to hurt Pacquiao that time.

Bradley also noted that Pacquiao turned defensive in that first fight and "only worked like, maybe, a minute in every round."

Bradley, who bolstered his stock with victories over Ruslan Provodnikov and Juan Manuel Marquez, respectively, said he expects Pacquiao to be on the defensive in their rematch.

"I don't think he's going to engage that much, man," said Bradley.

Boxing pundits have actually noticed Pacquiao's diminished finishing kick in his fights since 2010.

They felt that Pacquiao was in a position to stop Antonio Margarito in 2010, Shane Mosley in 2012 and Bradley, but did not go for the kill.

MLB OKs protective cap for pitchers, fit for camp



NEW YORK (AP)—

Big league pitchers might feel safer on the mound this season.

Major League Baseball has approved a protective cap for pitchers, hoping to reduce the damage from line drives to head that have brought some terrifying and bloody scenes in the last few years.

The heavier and bigger new hat was introduced Tuesday and will be available for testing during spring training on a voluntary basis. Major leaguers and minor leaguers won't be required to wear it - comfort is likely to be a primary concern.

"Obviously, it'd be a change," two-time Cy Young winner Clayton Kershaw of the Los Angeles Dodgers told the MLB Network. "I'm definitely not opposed to it."

"I think it'd take a lot of getting used to," he said. "You don't look very cool, I'll be honest."

The safety plates made by

isoBLOX are sewn into the hat and custom fitted. They weigh an extra six to seven ounces—a baseball weighs about five ounces, by comparison—and offer protection to the forehead, temples and sides of the head. They'll make the hats about a half-inch thicker in the front and around an inch wider on the sides.

Several pitchers have been hit in the head by line drives in the recent seasons. Brandon McCarthy sustained a brain contusion and skull fracture after being struck in 2012 and Doug Fister was hit during the World Series that October.

Toronto's J.A. Happ and Tampa Bay's Alex Cobb were sidelined after being hit last year.

McCarthy tweeted that he had already tried out the fortified cap and that it was "headed in right direction but not game ready."

Said Arizona reliever Brad Ziegler: "I think they're on the right track, but the hat they approved isn't remotely close to comfortable enough to

Lampkin also scored Kagman's first point in the fourth, making a split charity past the halfway mark of that frame.

Kagman dropped to a 1-1 record to fell to third place in the five-team field, while Eucon improved to a 2-0 to share the lead with MHS. Saipan Southern High School (2-0) and Saipan International School (0-3) complete the standings.

Junior Varsity

Eucon 35 — Alamer 9, Pecson 8, J. Wang 6, Li 5, P. Wang 4, J. Wang 2, J. Wang 1.

KHS 32 — Castro 7, Muna 7, Jones 6, Retan 4, Lampkin 3, Tenorio 3, Aron 2.

Scoring by quarters: 1-3, 11-15, 18-27, 35-32.

Varsity

Eucon 71 — Yu 39, T. Li 13, R. Wang 12, Ren 5, W. Li 2.

KHS 57 — Lampkin 22, Jo. Santos 18, J. Santos 10, Sakisat 6, Ada 1.

Scoring by quarters: 20-16, 30-23, 49-34, 71-57.

wear in games."

In an email to The Associated Press, he said, "If you're not 100 percent focused on executing your pitches, you have almost no chance of success. And that hat is uncomfortable enough that it would be a big distraction to wear it."

"We talked to a lot of guys who had been through this, and they provided a wealth of information to help us," said Bruce Foster, CEO of the 4Licensing Corporation, parent company of isoBLOX. "We went through a myriad of different designs to develop this."

Foster said the cap went through extensive testing and provided protection from line drives up to 90 mph in the front of the head and 85 mph on the side.

CNMI

From Page 28

ed in the Micro Games in Palau and will be joined by weightlifting and volleyball, which missed the previous competition. Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association is sending both women's and men's teams in the indoor tournament and has a total of 28 delegates. NMIVA was scheduled to have a meeting last night to talk to interested players and coaches.

Northern Marianas Weightlifting Association, on the other hand, has started its series of tryouts to determine the seven individuals that will represent the group to the Micro Games for the first time in more than a decade.

KARATEDO

From Page 28

highest rank in the Japanese system.

Right now, Ishiguro said between 20 and 30 individuals are joining his regular karatedo classes at the group's facility located at the second floor of the Himawari Restaurant in Garapan. The 40-year karatedo veteran is conducting practices



TITLE SPONSOR

Saipan Fishermen's Association President Gene Weaver, second from left, receives a \$6,700 donation in January 2014 from MARPAC resident manager Guy F. Pudney as part of MARPAC's major sponsorship of this year's 30th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament tentatively scheduled for July. MARPAC has donated \$8,900 in cash and in-kind support and has signed a two-year commitment with SFA. Pictured from left are SFA treasurer/PR and ad chair Martin F. Duenas, Weaver, Pudney, and MARPC sales manager James K. Lee.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joseph Jucutan, NMWA's secretary general, said they held a try out early this month and the Marianas Strength Gym in Garapan and invited members of Get Fit CNMI to join the qualifier. He added that the group will also hold a national championship to select the athletes that will earn slots on the team.

Other federations have also started their qualifiers and more are expected to follow soon. BANMI has began its trials and now has a pool of players to choose from, while the canoe group are conducting trials every Monday and Wednesday from 5pm to 6:30pm and Saturdays from 8am to 9:30pm at Kilili Beach and qualifiers will run only until Feb. 1.

"Tryouts are supervised by

head coaches Justin Andrews and Dana Okano using methods agreed upon by NMNPSF. Objective criteria will be used to the extent possible. Ultimate selection will be based on athletic performance versus other candidates in timed events, strength events, and endurance events. Other criteria will include experience, leadership, attitude and attendance," Northern Marianas National Paddle Sport Federation official Richard Sikkell said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Canoe is hoping to bounce back from its lackluster performance in Palau, while the entire CNMI Team faces a tough task to match if not surpass the 2010 delegates' 92-medal haul.

The CNMI finished second to Palau in the medal standings

in the 2010 Micro Games after collecting 44 gold, 23 silver, and 25 bronze medals. The 44 gold medals were the most the Commonwealth won so far in the Games since its inception in 1968.

The Rezne Wong-led swimming team gave the CNMI the most medals (35) with 23 of them gold medals, seven silvers, and five bronzes. Athletics contributed 13 gold medals, five silvers, and seven bronzes, while tennis added three gold medals, four silvers, and four bronzes. Table tennis chipped in three gold medals, two silvers, and one bronze, while triathlon also had three gold medals and one silver, and baseball and women's basketball won silver medals.

EUCON

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drawing crucial points from Wayne Li, who made a field goal and a split free throw in the closing minute of the match. Kagman had a chance to send the game it overtime, as it had the last possession, but failed to pull up for a game-tying triple in the dying seconds, as it fumbled against Eucon's pressure defense.

The Blazers notched the victory despite nearly going scoreless first period. Eucon converted only one free throw in the opening canto, but Kagman did not perform well either, drilling only 3 points.

The Ayuyus then picked up their scoring in the ensuing periods, earning 12 points each in the second and third to take a 27-18 lead, with only one quarter to go. Kagman eventually collapsed in the payoff canto, connecting only two field goals courtesy of Jeffery Castro and Juwan Lampkin's basket.

every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 5pm to 8pm. Classes are divided into levels with the beginners class scheduled in the first session and the last set for advanced students.

Ishiguro, who started the federation in 2012, said they want to visit schools and other places in the CNMI to look for athletes that they could bring to Japan to train and com-

pete. He said there is one female student in his class that is showing a lot of promise and if plans push through, she could make the trip to Japan and improve her skills. Ishiguro also has a karatedo school in Japan and has affiliation with other groups there. His association with other karatedo groups allows him to bring coaches to Saipan.

"Next month, another coach

is coming to help our students and also participate in the demonstration at Street Market," Ishiguro said.

He added that the NMKF is also planning to hold local competitions and bring Japanese karatedo students for an exhibition with Saipan athlete.

"We plan to have a cultural sports exchange here," the 1998 Wado-Kai European Kumite champion said.

7th Annual Coffee Trail Run 20K Finishers

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Charlie Sendin keeps his strong pace as he heads to the finish line of last Saturday's 7th Annual Coffee Trail Run at the American Memorial Park.



Jesse James goes for a runner-up finish in the 20K race.



Peter Prestley acknowledges the crowd on his way to the finish line.



Pipit Ball is a few steps away from completing the race.



Steven Johnson makes in to the finish line soaked in rain.



Goshi Sato slows down as he nears the finish line.



Mamiko Oshima-Berger smiles as she goes for a first place finish in the women's division.



A visiting runner from Japan waves to the crowd.



Ernie Moises goes for a strong finish.



Japan's Maki Narita is greeted by strong rain on her way to the finish line.



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Super Bowl
circus takes
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

CNMI to send 173 to Micro Games

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

A bigger CNMI delegation is heading to Pohnpei this year to compete in the 2014 Micronesian Games.

Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association president Michael White, in an email to *Saipan Tribune* last Tuesday, said the Commonwealth will have 173 delegates to this year's Micro Games, 40-plus athletes/officials more than the CNMI sent to Palau during the 2010 edition of the quadrennial event.

The CNMI has entries in basketball, weightlifting, swimming, lawn tennis, athletics, baseball, spearfishing, canoe racing, and indoor volleyball. These sports federations beat last Friday's deadline for submission of entries (by numbers) to the 2014 Micro Games, which will run from July 19 to 29. White then turned over the

list by entries to the organizing committee in Pohnpei last Monday.

On the list, Northern Marianas Athletics has the most delegates with 30, while Basketball Association of Northern Mariana Islands indicated it will be sending 14 male and 14 female delegates (12 players each from the men's and women's teams and coaches) to the Games. Swimming will have 12 male and seven female swimmers, tennis has nine (five male and four female), baseball has 24, spearfishing has four, and canoe has 22 (11 each from the men's and women's teams).

All these federations compete—
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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants in the Northern Marianas Weightlifting Association's tryout for the 2014 Micronesian Games pose for a photo after the qualifier at the Marianas Strength Gym in Garapan early this month.

Eucon stuns Kagman in MISO caging



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Eucon International School supporters cheer from the bleachers, as their player goes up for a shot against Mount Carmel School in an earlier game in the varsity division of the MISO caging at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Eucon International School handed Kagman High School its first loss of the season after cruising to a 63-57 victory in their varsity game in the 2013-2014 Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization Boys Basketball League last Monday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Team captain Allen Yu led the Blazers' upset of the Ayuyus, as he sizzled for a game-high 39 points.

Yu's hot shooting gave Eucon its second win in four games and snapped Kagman's two-game winning streak.

Yu's guns were blazing right in the first quarter, as he scored 12 points, including 9 of Eucon's last 11 markers in that canto, which ended with the Blazers on top, 20-16. Yu added 5 more points in the second frame and nearly matched the total output of Kagman (7) to up their advantage to 7 at the break, 30-23.

The usually active offense of the Ayuyus was a bit quiet in the second quarter with Jonathan



Santos, who already made 7 markers after the opening period, scoreless in the next frame. He was then held to two field goals in the third period and Kagman drew points from only two players at the start of the second half with Jason Lampkin adding 7, allowing Eucon to stretch the margin to twin digits, 49-34.

The Blazers widened the gap despite getting only two field goals from Yu, who received the needed help from four of his teammates. Eucon went on to preserve the double-digit

spread, as Yu finished what he started, capping the fourth and final quarter with a 17-point production.

Yu's explosion in the fourth canto was enough to counter the combined efforts of Lampkin and Santos, who nailed 10 and 7 markers, respectively in that quarter.

Meanwhile, Eucon also scored an upset against Kagman in the junior varsity division, 35-32.

The Blazers stole the win after holding the Ayuyus to 5 points in the fourth quarter and

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Karatedo group to visit schools, hold demos



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students of Northern Mariana Islands Karatedo Federation president Eiichi Ishiguro perform drills during a training session at the group's facility in Garapan last week.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Mariana Islands Karatedo Federation will be visiting schools and other establishments to promote the sport in the CNMI.

NMIKF president Eiichi Ishiguro, through interpreter Yuko Togawa, said they will be visiting Marianas High School and Saipan Southern High

School next month to make a presentation about karatedo. The group is also scheduled to have a presentation with the Department of Public Safety and holds demonstrations at the Street Market.

"We would like to drum up interest to the sport by reaching out to the community," said Ishiguro, a seven-Dan master (just three levels behind the

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